The Art of Hope

By Newhope

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The Art of Hope

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Chapter 1

The Art of Hope

Hey guys! This is the first story I have ever started on or wrote. I hope you like it I know that it is somewhat boring right now but I promise it is going to get way more thrilling. I have some crazy plot planed! IF you read and like it PLZ spread the word, vote, and comment!

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

I sit on the lawn chair feeling down again. I can hear Katie, my three year old sister, playing in the leaves. She ran over to me.

"Sissy, come jump in the weaves wif me." Her bright green eyes glowed in excitement. Her bleach blonde

hair curled in every direction. Her smile always warmed my heart, she was the only reason I kept going sometimes and that was because she needed me. She had no clue how much I needed her.

"Not now sweetie, I have to get you to the babysitters, and I have to go to work."

"But, I wanna stay wif you."

"I am going to pick you up late tonight and you are staying with me again tonight." No she does not live with me. My mother 'will not allow it'. I have never liked my mother and never will. She is simply not high on my list. In my opinion she is a drug dealing slut or call girl. Whatever you feel like calling her is fine by me. I left when I was 16 and have lived on my own for four years now. I moved in with my friend Annie into this three bedroom, two bath house. The rent was cheap because Annie was dating the guys son. She gave Katie one room because I keep her about two to three weeks total out of every month while mom is out on a 'business trip'.

"YAY" She squealed

We went inside and she ran to her room as I went to put on my bar tending uniform. I took a quick look in the mirror my dark blonde, curly hair in a ponytail. My size four waist and ghetto ass, that's what Annie calls it, looks pretty kick ass in the short shorts. But, the top is really what brought the guys to the bar. It is a white button up shirt that was missing the first four or so buttons; this brought out my C cup size a little too much. But, the boss says 'it brings in costumers, deal!'

A knock on the door brought me out of my thoughts and into the present. I looked at my watch shit I was going to be late again. Shit, I ran to the front door. I opened it without looking before. It was Dave shit, fuck, shit, Dave is my ex-boyfriend. I really don't want to get into it right now. I looked at him with hate; he was the one person in this whole world I hated more than my mother.

"Dave get the fuck away from me. I left you, and it's never going to happen, I'm not coming back to you. Now, I have to go or I'm going to be late for work."

"Come on, baby." He used that southern deep bas voice that at one time made me melt. Now that I knew the real him it just did not work.

"Um, yeah can we do this later? I have work." I told him without interest. "Katie, sweetie it's time to go!" I yelled. She ran into my arms and we both ignored him. She knew the drill. Just don't talk to him. We left him standing there in my front yard.

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I dropped Katie off at the babysitter, and then headed to work. I walked in the back door and went to the back room to put my purse away.

"Hey Missy." That velvety voice sent a shiver down my spine. I took a breath to calm myself and turned around.

"Well, Hi Jace." I gave him one of my award winning smiles; then turned to hang up my purse. "How's Katie doing?" I have never seen anyone love Katie more than me until I meet Jace. That is just one of the reasons I had a soft spot for him. I looked him in the eyes and gave him a small smile telling him thanks

for caring. He smiled back knowing what I was thinking. I broke the silence "She is great; she stayed with me last night and she is staying with me again tonight."

He opened his mouth to say something when the door slammed open. I glanced up to see that it was, Ben. Great he was such a womanizing ass, but with his surfer body, deep blue eyes, and blond hair he was really easy on the eyes.

"Well, Hi Missy." He looked me up and down not even knowing Jace was standing right beside me. When he passed he slapped my ass.

"If you don't fucking stop touching me I swear." I spat at him but there was really nothing I could do. In my past three years of working here I have come so close to getting fired about 5 or so odd times, and it is all because I fought back. Ben laughed at me and left the room.

Jace came over and hugged me. I melted a little as he hugged me; he always knew what I needed. I pulled away and gave him a grin saying thanks. He really was the image of perfection. His almost black hair

was spiked down over to the side of his face. His dark hair and tan skin brought out his sky blue eyes. His black work shirt was just tight enough that his biceps and chest muscles showed how ripped he was. He stood about three inches higher than my five feet five inches. He looked somewhat like Damon off of The Vampire Diaries.

I pulled myself away "What where you going to say?" I asked trying to sound like the closeness of our bodies did not affect me.

"Don't worry about him. I'll take care of it this time. I don't need this job." That was not the answer to my question but it sure did shock me. I looked him over, his jaw and fists clenched; anger was shining in his eyes.

"NO" I shouted in horror. If he got fired then what would I do to get my mind off of my life? His face curved into a questioning look. "You can't. If you get fired then who is going to help me when he does it again and again?" I smiled shyly.

His face softened and I knew he understood. Jace had helped me through some of the hardest times in my

life; I did not have to tell him I needed him, but he still knew I did.

"Okay Fine, you win. Now let's get to work." He sighed and we walked out of the back room together.

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A/N

Next chapter is bound to surprise you!

Chapter 2

The Art of Hope (2)

Chapter 2

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

Work was finally over. My feet hurt, that was nothing new, and I was really getting sick of Ben eye fucking me. 'Why is it so bad today?' I wondered to myself. I was getting my purse when he walked in.

"Jace, Dad needs you in his office." Ben said and Jace walked out of the room. Shit, I'm in the same room as him, alone. My entire body went still.

"Hey sexy, looks like it's just us in here. What do you say we start a party? Just you and me" He said with a wink.

"Um, let me think about that.....Hell, fucking, No!" he looked taken back for a second and I smiled to myself. "Does that clear everything up?" I went on without giving him time to say anything. "Good. I have to go get my sister."

I began to walk out of the room when he grabbed my arm and flung me into the wall. I could not breath, my head was spinning and my legs gave way. I did not fall because his legs and stomach pressed me into the wall. I could feel a bulge on my thigh; I thought I was going to be sick. He began kissing my neck; I tried pushing him of off me, but realized he had both of my wrists in one of his hands above my head. With my head still spinning I struggled to find my legs. When I did I found that he was holding one of my legs up at his waist. Not getting much strength I thrust the other into his manhood. He groaned in pain, but did not move away.

"Nice try, but your somewhat weak." He began to kiss his way down to my chest."I like that." He snickered then moaned with pleasure when he found my cleavage. My breathing quickened. I thought I had got away from this when I left Dave. Before I knew it, he had me on the table straddling me and ripping my white shirt open. He moaned as his lips went to my cleavage again and my body shut off not even moving when I willed it to.

"Is this the only way you can get some? Why did you not tell me? I would gladly give you the money for a hooker!" I said in a dangerous tone, yet I let some fake sympathy leak in just for show.

This pissed him off. He squeezed my wrists that he had taken in one hand. He looked down at my pants probably thinking of the easiest way to get them off. "Having trouble?" I asked faking a laugh. At that moment I realized how much shit I was in. He punched me in the face and the dark clouds threatened to take my sight as my brain started to close off. NO, I yelled to myself; I could not let him have his way with me. I fought to stay awake. I felt

him slide my shorts and lacey underwear off; as he laughed darkly with pleasure. Then the dark engulfed me and I was out cold.

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I jumped awake, screaming. I looked around the room to see where I was, while taking deep breaths to slow my heart. I was in my room. How did I get here? Was that a dream. "Please tell me it was a dream." I whispered to myself while rocking back a forth. Heavy footsteps walked to my bedroom door. My mind spun. How did we get here? I began to cry when I remembered once again that he had raped me while I was out cold. The door opened, but I did not look up. I had no more fight in me. He had taken my pride.

"Missy, Missy, Missy please tell me you are all right?" said an anxious velvety voice. I looked up shocked. It was Jace; his eyes examined me with worry as he approached my bed.

"I-I don't know? D-id. He. Um," I choked out; I just could not say the last part. I looked into his eyes as he brushed the hair from my face.

"I heard a bang and I came running," he paused looking at me "I got there before he could unbutton his pants." I took a deep breath and let it out.

"Jace, I don't know how to thank you." I said with as much cheerfulness as I could muster. Then Katie popped into my mind. "Oh,"

"What?" Jace asked worried again.

"I have to go get Katie." I hopped up, but lost control when my head began to spin. I began to fall when Jace caught me.

He chuckled "Don't worry she is safe sleeping in her bed. It's you I am worried about." His eyes turned to concerned.

"I'm fine. It's nothing I have not been through before." I mumbled the last part really talking to myself.

"What?" He asked in a soft astonished voice. I looked up in amazement. How did he hear that? Then I turned red.

"Um, nothing" I said shyly as I scattered to the bathroom.

"Missy? What does 'nothing I have not been through before' mean?" He looked at me crossly.

I looked at the floor. "I really don't want to talk about it. I am going to take a shower now. Okay?" I made the mistake of looking at him. His eye bore into mine.

"Tell me." His teeth clenched. I looked up pleading with him. His face was stern and I gave in. "Dave" I spoke so low that I did not even hear it. His arms crashed around me like he was holding me together. Well, he was because I was sobbing. I had not told anyone why Dave and I broke up. He did not ask anything; he just held me.

After my sobs became dry I lifted my head and broke away from his embrace to take a shower. I walked into the bathroom numb. I could not even feel the heat from the shower. I hit the wall in anger; trying to feel anything.

"Missy, are you OK?" Jace yelled anxiously.

"Yeah, yeah. Just had a moment." I explained

I got out of the shower and put on a t-shirt and my cheer shorts. I glanced at the clock it was 2:23 in the morning. I knew I would not get any sleep so I walked into the living room. Jace was watching some movie on the TV. I sat down beside him; he wrapped his arms around me and pulled me into him. After the movie went off and the next one came on and I drifted off to sleep.

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Hey guys, this one just has a little action. Hope you like it. Tell a friend, vote, and comment. I changed the plot around a little so it will shock you (I hope). Sorry if it has mistakes. I'm really bad at finding them in my own writings. But I try!

Chapter 3

The Art of Hope (3)

Chapter 3

New POV! I know I love to know the whole story from every POV! So I am treating you!

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Jace POV

I woke with the TV still on. I went to roll over but the feel of a light body and soft skin stopped me. Oh, I forgot that she was laying on me. I sighed, it just felt so good to just hold her, and keep her safe. I shook the thought out of my head. I was getting way to close. I had to keep telling myself that it would mess

everything up. There was no way we could ever be together. It may cause my life and more hardships for her.

She moved just a little and that's when I realized just how close she was to me. One of her legs was slung around my waist; she was half on top of me. Her head was on my chest, with one hand resting on my abs and the other under her head. She looked so peaceful; almost like she had not a care in the world. Which I know was not the case. Little did she know she was in for much more problem that I could not keep from affecting her. I sighed and began to stroke her comforting her. It killed me that I was the one that would change her life. Now, for the better or the worse, was up to her.

She tensed and I knew she had woken up. Before I could think she jumped up and blushed looking cute as ever.

"Um, I'm sorry I-I did um, not..." she tailed off not knowing what to say her face still pink from embarrassment.

"Don't worry. It was a boring movie anyway. I drifted off too." That made her relax a little more.

"Would you like some breakfast? I make a mean French toast!" I was trying to change the subject and it worked. I saw her eyes light up and she beamed up at me. Score one for me. Shit, I can't fall for her it would screw everything up, yet it warmed me inside and out to see her smile like that. And I knew I should stop this now before she got me even more wrapped around her finger.

"Oh Jace, Really? Oh, French toast is my favorite!" She yipped in excitement.

"Of course, it is my favorite too. Do I need to make Katie any?" I asked.

She shook her head "No, she won't be up for a long time its only 8:00 and she was up late last night. Plus, she likes her Fruity Pebbles"

We sat at the table eating. I could tell that Missy wanted to say something, but I would give her all the time she needed to tell me.

"Um Jace, can I ask you something?" she looked nervous.

"Yeah of course, shoot." I gave her an assuring smile.

"Um," she looked down at her plate "what all really happened last night?" I could hear the fear in her voice. My body stiffened from remembering her beautiful, perfect, lightly tanned body half naked unconscious on the table.

It took me some time to reply. I began in a soft voice to control my anger. "I heard a bang and wanted to come and check on you. Something felt off, and I was about to leave the room when the boss kept ranting about something." I took a breath as I began the next part. I really did not want to tell her but she had the right to know. Right? I could see dark red in the corners of my eyes. All I wanted to do was to punch something. I felt as if no matter what I did the anger would never go away, so strong but there was nothing I could do about it. I spoke though my teeth my fists clenched and my head down. "I walked in and Ben was-was, um, working on his pants." I did not bother to tell her he was having problems

because of the size of his bulge. "I looked around for you. A-and you, you lay on the table unconscious and halfway undressed. Before my brain could think, he was down on the ground and I was punching the life out of him. Then I remembered you on the table and stopped to see if you were ok." I looked at her face and saw the wet glisten look that people get before they begin to cry.

She placed her hand on mine "thank you! You don't know how much It means to me that you came to help" one lonely tear rolled down her cheek and I put my hand up to brush it away.

She shook her head and pulled back. "You know what, I am going to wake Katie up early and go ahead and take her to my mother's house. I don't want her to see me like this." She looked up at me. "Um, I guess you could um, stay here if you would like until I come back." I saw the hope in her eyes and I just could not say no. Everything about her drew me in and I just could not stay away not even for her safety. Not that she was in danger with me; it was her heart that would not be safe.

"As long as you need me here I will be here." I spoke in a strong, yet caring voice. One that would make her feel safe. "How about you go and get ready and I will get Katie?"

She and Katie had left just a few seconds ago and I was lazed out on the couch thinking. I was sick of having to push her away because 'it would make thinks complicated'. I was becoming engrossed in her and I wanted to be with her all the time. So, I made up my mind that I was going to take her out to dinner tonight. I just did not care what the consequences would be.

She came thru the door. She was still in the cheer shorts and big t-shirt I had put on her last night. That was by the hardest things I have ever done. She was so appealing but at that moment when I had to dress her I found that I was amazingly controlled. I did not even get aroused by her perfection, and I knew it was because she was being taken advantage of. Shaking it out of my head I realized that I still wanted to take her out, she needed it I kept telling myself.

She walked in and looked me over then smiled. "Comfy?" I could tell she was getting better, but that bothered me. Most girls would not be able to pick themselves back up so fast, and that told me she had been through this before. I shook the thought away before it could show on my face and put on a big smile.

"You know it." Then I patted the couch and she came to sit. She sat on the other end with as much room between as she could get. I reached for her arm and pulled her into me. I felt her smile against my chest.

"Um Missy?" I asked in a questioning tone. I was getting nervous. WHAT?! Nervous I don't get nervous not ever. I can kill 20 men with my own hands, but I could not ask Missy out on a date. Hell, what has she done to me?

"Yes?" She had the same questioning tone and she began to breathe harder.

"How about, no, um, Would you like to have dinner with me tonight?" I asked hopeful.

She did not answer and her body went rigged. I freaked, shit, damn, shit, what have I done, shit she does not like me, shit, FUCK, now how are we going to be friends. She moved her face to look at me. I tried to compose my face. I know it did not work.

She gave a small smile. "Well, where are we going?" My breath stopped. She said yes. Oh, thank God. At that moment I wanted to kiss her I wanted to feel her lips on mine. I could feel it in my mind, I could taste her on my tongue. Her lips felt so soft in my mind and I hoped that it would feel this good in real life. I heard a soft gorgeous moan. I stopped, shocked and then open my eyes. Holy shit, I was not feeling it I was really kiss her. Every bone, every muscle, and every tendon in my body vibrated with excitement.

She realized I had stopped kissing her and pulled back slowly looking up into my eyes. Her piercing green eyes widened in question as her breath blew across my lips. My body hummed for me to kiss her and so I leaned in to kiss her again. Her lips grazed across mine and before I knew it I slide my tongue across her bottom lip begging, yes begging, for more.

As my heart hammered on to an exciting new speed, my hands went to the small of her back and hers went around my neck and into my hair. I moaned huskily as she opened her mouth for me; she tasted of cherry chapstick with the freshness of Colgate. Her lips were the softest lips I had ever felt in my life, it was like rubbing you lips across a rose, and I just could not get enough. I began to work my tongue around her mouth studying it like I would be tested on it. I pulled away from her lips and worked my way down her jaw line and then to that soft spot on her neck. She shuttered; then I gently nipped at her neck causing her to moan and I could feel the vibrations on my lips. The sound and feel made my pants a little too tight and I shifted to relieve the pressure. In the process pulling her into my lap causing her to straddled me and I knew she could feel my hard.

All too soon she pulled away as she looked up at me with a shy smile. She shook her head and looked down. "I can't do this right now." Her words sad, but Is that because she had to stop me? A little part of me wanted to think she wanted more, but after

yesterday most girls would not even be able to kiss like that.

I scooped her in a hug "I'm very sorry. I did not mean to make you uncomfortable."

Her grip on me tightened and she giggled. She moved her lips up to my ear and whispered "That was far from uncomfortable" In my ear seductively.

Hell, I told myself. I am too far gone to care about the consequences of us being together. And to tell myself the truth I did not fucking care. I have not felt this good in a long time and I am not going to let it slip away.

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Ok, SOOOO what do you think? Do you like Jace's mind? Well, I do.

I looked over it some I hope I found every mistakes! Well, vote, comment, and tell a friend. Thanks!

Chapter 4

The Art of Hope (4)

Chapter 4

Missy POV

I did not know what to wear. He never did tell me where he was taking me. The excitement inside me was almost unbearable. I never did feel this way with Dave. With Dave things were different; it was more a game of lust. I did not find that out until about six months in. He was my everything but I found out that I did not ever really love him. It was that fateful day that I learned. I told him I was not in the mood for sex, that I had had a hard day and just wanted to rest. The anger in his eyes scared the life out of me

and I had never seen it before. That is the night he hit me, no he never did, um, have his way with me. I left too soon. He says he is sorry, and I think he is but I just can't be that girl who for gives and forgets. Then gets the shit kicked out of her over and over, and so I ended it. Yes, it did break my heart and it took about a year for me to even look at another guy, but I never did let it get to my soul. The reason? Well, I DON'T let people in. Not even Jace, right now Jace was just my safe harbor, some that I could trust would not hurt me. I felt like I could let my guard down when I was with him.

The ringing of my phone brought me back to reality. I looked at my caller ID. It was Annie. Oh, I had totally forgotten about her. I had not seen her in two days, but that was nothing knew she has been staying with her boyfriend a lot lately. I felt that it was about time, they have been dating for three years.

"Hey Annie, What's up I have not heard from you in a while? Oh, and can you make this quick I have a date!" I stated proudly.

"A DATE" She screeched. "OMG, OMG, OMG, Who, WHO, Please tell me!" she begged joyfully into the phone. This is why I just love Annie. She was always happy and I found that I became happy when I was around her. "Is it Jace?" She asked slyly. I knew she knew I liked him and I did not even have to tell her.

"Yes, Its Jace" A said in a calm voice hopping I did not sound too excited.

"Ha ha Missy. Good , I know that you are jumping with excitement."

"I know I can hardly contain myself" I said while jumping up and down like a 16 year old girl. "Um, what was it you wanted?"

"Oh um, I have good news and then bad news." She said happily?

"Bad." I simple stated.

"Well, I am kind of moving out" She stopped to give me a second then began again "BUT, me and Jason (her boyfriend) Are getting married!"

How could I be pissed that she was moving out, she had dreamed about this day forever. Well, we both had but I had yet to find my prince charming. "Oh, Annie how is that bad news? This is amazing. Roommates are easy to find true love on the other hand...."are impossible.

"Thanks so much Missy and I want you to be my maid of honor! And I am moving out tonight I will get my stuff this weekend, but the wedding is not until 2 months!" wow she already had the date.

"Of course I will be your maid of honor and how come you already know the date?" I mean who knows the date that fast?

"An early wedding gift from our parents!" She yipped in excitement!

"Aww, well I hate to cut this short, but I am still around in my towel and Jace will be here in like 3 seconds!"

"Well, let's get offa here and you HAVE FUN!" She told me in a wink wink kind of tone.

"Yeah, yeah, bye"

I put on my nicest underwear. My black lacey underwear that Annie thought would be a good gift for my birthday to 'help me move on'! What? I wanted to look nice all the way to the skin.

I then went to my closet and tried to find something that would fit any kind of date. I put on my jet black skinny jeans, my red camisole and my black and grey plaid courter sleeve jacket. I then went into my bathroom and put on some light make-up, the basic natural colors, and red flats. With my hair I did a small poof in the front and the rest up in a pony tail. Lastly I picked a long chain necklace with a black heart on the end (no pun intended) and some large black earrings. I know it was very black and red but it was my favorite outfit!

I knock came from the door. I shot of excitement ran throughout my body. It took ever muscle in my body for me not to run to the front door. I slowly opened the door.

He was breathtaking to say the least. He had a black pinstriped button up dress shirt rolled to his forearms with dark jeans. I made it up to his eyes to

see he had not made it to mine. They were fixed on my chest. I let out a fake coughed then his eyes came to mine. I could have sworn I was him blush but it was gone before I could make for sure.

A huge smile grew on his face eyeing me again. "Um, WOW" he said breathlessly and I could not help but smile. "You look amazing" I did? Psht, did he look in the mirror.

"Thanks" I mumble quietly "you don't look so bad yourself" And with that he grabbed my hand and hoisted me into his truck. Let's just say with the size of the tires the step came up to my thigh and I silently thanked myself for not wearing a dress.

He took me to a small Italian restaurant. It had music, candles, and warm inviting colors like burgundy and cream. The waiter came and took our orders as we started to talk. We talked about Katie and his brother Timothy. He did not really like Timothy he said he was somewhat of a user and abuser with drugs.

"Where is Annie? I thought she lived with you" he said with a questioning chuckle.

"Oh, I forgot to tell you she is getting married to Jason. Bad news is that she is moving her stuff out this weekend." I was a little sad I mean it is hard to find a good housemate, but I was too happy for her to let it get to me.

"Oh, wow" he looked a little shocked but I was too so "so what are you going to do about the rent?"

"Well, I have the rest of this month to find someone so I am not too worried about it." He looked at me with amazement and shock.

Why? What did I say? "What's that look for?"

"How do you do it" he questioned shaking his head.

"Do what" I really had no clue what he was talking about.

"Get over things, ya know, move on, and not let anything get to you" he searched my eyes, no he was searching my soul. "don't get me wrong it's one of my favorite qualities in you, but I don't get how you do it."

"OH that," I did not really know the answer I mean "um, well, to tell you the truth I really don't know" I thought I little harder and spoke as I searched my mind. I had never thought twice about it but now I wanted to know. "I guess I just find that the past is the past, I mean there is nothing that can be done to change it, so why be sad or mad about it. I have just realized that it is not worth it to be pissed over every little thing that happens." Wow, I guess I did know the reason.

He just gaped at me for a few minutes and that made the blood rush to my cheeks. I looked at the table a little self conscious. He spoke "Missy, look at me" I looked at him and he just looked at me with so much care and concern in his eyes that it melted my heart. "You are the most amazing women I have ever met in my life. I don't know how you do it. With your past and yet you're one of the most peaceful and happy persons I have ever meet." I was taken back with the 'most amazing women' as shudders of happiness shot throughout my body. I smiled and then the last part hit me like a ton of bricks 'with your past' shit, I told myself, fuck this is a damn pity date. Well, fuck here I

am falling head over heels for Jace who only pities me!

"What?" I said in a weak voice "this is all for pity? You don't even truly care do you?" I shook my head I did not want to believe this but the fact was right in front of me. I stood to leave when Jace grabbed my hand.

"Where are you going?"

"I can't do this if it's for pity Jace. I just can't."

"What?" he sounded pissed, really pissed. "You think this is for pity? Hell," he threw his hands up in defeat. He then he started rambling. "I am compromising everything.....she thinks this is pity.....i am so going to get the shitty end.....FUCK.....I could get fired or worse and she thinks.....!" I looked at him trying to put it together 'compromising, fired' WHAT? I put it in the back of my mind thinking it was about punching the living shit of Ben.

"Jace, fuck what am I supposed to think when you say 'with your past'?" I said with a shrug.

He took my hand a dragged me outside. I did not even realize that people had seen our little story unfold. He took my head in his hands. "Fuck Missy, I don't pity you. I was just saying that you fucking amaze me in every way possible. I love that you can take your shitty life and make it better." His eyes searched ever corner of my mind. I really had nothing to say so I just looked at the ground. "Ok then, you go get in the car and I will pay for the meal and then I will drive you home." He voice was not angry or mad just frustrated.

The ride home was quit neither of us said a word. He pulled into my driveway and parked the car. He turned to look at me. We just stared at one another not saying anything. He was studying me. I don't know why but he was. "Sorry" was all he said.

"No no, you're not" I spoke he looked at me with astonishment. He went to say something but I put my finger on his mouth tell him to shut up. "I'm the one that is sorry. You did nothing. I flew off the handle." It was true. "Now would you like to come in? We can pop in a movie" I said with a wink. I hope he knew he

was not getting any but I saw his eyes light up with hope.

"Of course" he leaned in a planted one my forehead.

Jace was lying on my bed taking a little over half of the room but I did not mind. I changed into my cheer shorts and big t-shirt. Jace had taken off his button up shirt to have just an undershirt with his jeans. Don't go getting the wrong idea. The DVD player was in my room. "Well I don't know about you but I am feeling something scary!"

"Me too" he said almost bored. "but I have seen all of the ones you have so they won't be as scary now." He did have a point.

"Ok then, action it is!" I put in the newest Rambo movie. I know what you are thinking but a girl can love action too.

As the movie started I drifted off in Jaces arms. I mean he was so warm and comforting. I just could not keep from falling into a relaxed sleep.

I woke up half way on top of Jace he was holding me to him. I turned over and he rolled over to form to

me, or you could call it spooning. I then drifted off to a light sleep when Jaces' phone rang, He pulled away but I just stayed there waiting for sleep to consume me once more.

"Hello, this is Agent Andrews." A quiet voice spoke.

I tensed, what the hell, how could Jace be an agent and not tell me. Well that's a stupid question I thought to myself he's an agent. I just lie there trying to act as if I was asleep. I wanted to know what he was for real, but I knew that it was none of my business.

"Yes sir things are going as planned. She completely trusts me." WHAT!? Well, I know he is not talking about me. Is he? Well, this just made it my business. Anger, hate, hurt, every bad feeling in the world took over my body and my breathing picked up, but I stayed still. This could not be happening, Jace is my safe harbor, my friend. Someone that could be more. Well not the hell now. I praised myself for not letting anyone in. I mean people ask why, then shit like this happens and i laugh in their face. Ha ha ha.

"Um, about that.....um I think we should wait longer before we tell her, I don't think she is ready." What? Tell me? Don't agents like spy on you or something? Confusion took me over I did not know what to think. As strong as I may be, this still hurt. The one and only person that I was about to completely trust had lied and faked it all. Don't get me wrong I love Annie with all my heart, but I don't tell her everything. She has a soft heart and I don't want to take that away from her.

"I just don't want our hole plan to backfire" then there was a long silences as the other person talked, "thank you sir, yes one month and we will break it too her" What the fuck? I was so pissed, but yet I did not want him to know that. I want to get to the bottom for things, to know the truth. Plus, I wanted Jace to pay. And pay BIG TIME!

He went to put his jeans on. I felt that it was time to wake up!

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

Sooo, what do you think? Hmm, and how do you feel about Jace? He he he! Well you will have to wait and see! Enjoy, Vote, comment! Thanks!!!!!

Chapter 5

The Art of Hope (5)

Chapter 5

I got it up faster than i thought i would :)!

Vote, comment, and ENJOY!

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

I rolled over to look at him. He gave me a sweet smile and leaned over to kiss my forehead. DICK! I yelled in my head.

"Do you mind if I take a shower?" He asked gruffly. I knew what he was hinting at, but I decided to play dumb.

"Why sure go ahead" I said "but you may smell like girl." I let out a fake giggle. "I will go make us some eggs" with that I left the room.

I was getting out the eggs when Jace came in and went out my front door. Why is he going outside? I thought to myself. My question was answered when he came back in with a duffel bag. Well, shit do I look that fucking easy. I decided to make my opinion known "well, do I look that easy?" I tried to sound playful and I guess it worked.

"No babe, I just always carry an extra outfit" Because he was an agent. DUH Missy, Duh!

"Well, lucky for you!" I was trying so hard not to get pissed but it was not working.

He left the room and I heard the shower turn on. I began to mix the eggs and butter the bread to be toasted when his cell rang. I looked at it wondering if I should answer. It was that song um, "I Hate my life" When it was at that part were they sing I hate my job, all of my rich friends, How fitting I said to myself as I inched closer and closer, finally I picked it up, opened the cell and said. "Hello, this is Missy. Um Jace is in

the shower can I take a message." I knew I was going to get it from him but I did not give a fuck. I mean he fucking lied to me and that is at the top of my No, No list.

"Um, yes" he sounded shocked and.....mad? "Can you tell Jace that it's an emergence" he did sound concerned.

I decided it could be someone dying so I would take the phone to Jace. "Um, well if you can hold just a second I will go get him."

"That would be wonderful thank you" he still sounded somewhat bewildered.

"Ok one second." I walked to the bathroom and knocked on the door. "Jace, there is someone on the phone for you" I said innocently.

"What, you answered my phone?" he sounded pissed but I just smiled. Take that ASSHOLE!

I answered in a hurt voice and put my face into a pout. "Um, I'm sorry it's just that the man says it's an emergency."

He opened the door with just a towel on. His skin was shimmering from the water, drops of moister running over his perfect six-pack and chest. It took me a minute to realize I was still pissed at him. When I made it to his eyes he was smirking with one hand on the door frame and the other out waiting for the phone. I handed him the phone and just walked away. Shit, Missy you can't just let him get to you like that.

I went back into the kitchen and finished cooking. I could hear Jace arguing with the man. I knew it was about me because he let my name slip once. Now I was really pissed it took all my strength to not chuck the pan across the room. That's the one thing I hate most about myself. My anger problems are bad, but the truth is, knowing this about Jace really killed me. I broke down. In my own kitchen. Now I am no baby I was not crying because I was broken hearted, that's weak and I am not weak. I was crying because I was so anger, and I had no way to deal with the anger so I just cried. The tears fell and I just fucking let them.

"Missy?" Jaces voice was full of concern witch pissed me off more and the tears came harder. "Missy what is wrong?"

"You know what's FUCKING WRONG" I yelled he looked shocked and a questioning look came to his face before the realization hit him. "You are what's FUCKING wrong" I took a deep breath looking back down. "You Fucking Ass, you fucking ass, I trusted you" I looked up at his face and I knew he knew what I was talking about. My first clenched in to my leg but I could not release the grip I had on them. It hurt like shit but it was the only way I was dealing with the anger so I let it be.

"Shit Missy, it is not like that. Fuck, how did you find out?" He was freaking. Thank God I was not the only one.

"I heard you this morning." I looked at him with hate. "And then I just heard my name, so I know it is about me!" I spat the words at him. Tears still falling down my cheeks.

He flinched. "Missy, Please, I-I c-can, I can fix this just let me make some calls and I will tell you everything. You need to know anyway." I looked at him.

I nodded my head. His eyes held so much hope. "This does not fucking mean I forgive you. I just want to know what is going on." My words hard and cold, but I did not give a fuck.

"Missy, I really did not want to hurt you. I am sorry I hope that one day you can forgive me." He said in a hushed sad voice. I felt bad for a second, but only a second. "I'm going to make some calls, tell them what is going on. If you want I am sure I can have it arranged for you to find out tonight."

"Please, I want to know!" I know I sounded like a child but this whole thing made me fill like one. I mean, what would you feel like?

He put his hand over mine. I looked up into his eyes "I just want to say that the world is not going to end. And after this is all said and done I still want to be with you no matter what it takes" he had with much regret and optimism.

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Jace had came back just long enough to tell me that he would pick me up around 7:00 and that it is important to make a good first impression so dress nice, then he left.

I stood in front of my mirror. I had straightened my hair and had put on just a little makeup that brought out my forest green eyes. I had on a strapless white dress that came just above my knees with a black jacket over top. I placed light grey pearls around my neck with matching pearls in my ears. Then lastly my favorite black high heeled pumps. I smiled to myself, happy with how I looked, then realizing Jace's huge ass tuck and my little white dress could be a problem. A knock came from the door and I slowly walked up to it. With my nerves going haywire, my knees shaking, and my head beginning to spin I opened the door. Did I really want to do this? I know I do, but what is this all about? I have not broken any FBI kind of law have I? Was Jace even in the FBI, CIA, or anything like that at all?

He must have known the questions that I had running threw my head because he said "Missy, it's going to be all right. I promise you that much, and if you never trust me again I would at least hope that you will trust me on this." I knew he wanted an "us" but I was not going to let myself fall for a lying asshole, yet I was somewhat dumbfounded. How does he know what is running though my mind? Then the word trust hit me and I became infuriated!

"Yeah, well, trust is something I have not received from you, so I am still worried as hell." I spat at him. You could say I was a little pissed (note sarcasm). His face turned his face to the ground. "Jace," he he still did not look up "Jace look at me" he brought up his head and meet my eyes "right now Jace your going to have to give me some time. I know I am being a bitch but truth be told, how would you feel and act? I can also tell you there will never be a you and me. You lost your chance." In case you have not noticed I am very straight forward. 'Why walk around it when you can walk threw it' is what I always say.

When I looked into his eyes I saw anger. "First, Believe it or not I was put her to protect you. I never wanted to lie and I have not lied about anything but being an agent." He took in a deep breath and slowly let it out. "Second, I like you. I mean I really, really like you. Being an agent has not changed that and it never will." His eyes held caring as well as pleading. "Third," he said in a hushed tone through clenched teeth "I am not and will not give up on you and me. I know you're pissed and I know that you hate me right now, but somewhere deep inside you, you care about me." I knew he was right, there was a part of me that really did, but the larger part of me was screaming 'HE FUCKING LIED! YOU CAN NOT TRUST HIM' over and over again. I just walked to his truck opened the door and heaved myself in without saying a word.

It was a quiet uncomfortable ride to the restaurant. We pulled up to a small restaurant that I could tell was far out of my price range but to tell you the truth I had a feeling that I was not going to be paying. The host took us to a back room where two men, which looked to be in their late 40s early 50s, stood as we

walked in. I felt the over power sense of authority from one man. He had a glow about him. I almost felt unreal like he was something special to the world. Jace bowed and said sir to a man that was about 5 feet 6 inch, pretty short for a man I thought to myself, he had black hair with patches of grey above his ears as it was parted to the side and slicked down. The style itself said he was powerful or high ranking, but the feeling I got from him made me feel small and insecure. He had a perfectly faltering, for his thin figure, tail coat on and black pants to match.

Then Jace just bowed his head ever so slightly to the over man (more like a head bob). He looked like Jace only older. He was dressed similar to what the other man but the suit did not look as high class. Jace spoke. "Missy this is my father" the man that look like Jace held out his hand and I placed my hand in his ready to shack when he pulled it up to his mouth and kissed it lightly. OK this is creepy! 'RUN, RUN NOW WHILE YOU CAN' yelled a voice inside me.

"Hello, Mister Anderson" as I did a similar head bob as what Jace did. "It is nice to meet you." I said

sincerely, but when I looked up again he looked taken back, shocked almost. What had I done wrong?

"No, no Miss Mary Elizabeth Dawson, It is a pleasure to meet you at last." He said in a slow bow. What the heck? Strange people that's for sure. In case you did not find out my real name is Mary Elisabeth Dawson. It became Missy over time. First I was called Mary, then my mother would call me Miss Mary, slowly over time it became Missy. To tell you the truth I really liked Missy the best. Mary Elizabeth was too formal.

"And this is" Jace spoke formally. "This is King William Ventura." WHAT, WHAT, what THE FUCKING HELL IS GOING ON HERE! My body shut down. I could not move a muscle; I tried to bow because that is the respectful thing to do, but I just could not. I felt my knees go weak as a strong arm held me up by my waist. I knew what was happening I was in shock, but not the smart part of my brain, no it was yelling 'I TOLD YOU TO RUN. DID YOU FUCKING LISTEN TO ME? NO, so that is what you get'. Other than that I

was asking myself 'why did Jace bring you to the King and what is he the King of?'

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Now the fun begins! MUWHAHAHAHA

Thanks for reading so comment, and vote!

Chapter 6

The Art of Hope (6)

Just a quickie before you read. I STRONGLY suggest that you download/buy/barrow Cage the Elephants' self title album and Ocean Eyes by Owl City. They are all I can listen to right now. I know they are from two totally different genres but they are AMAZING!

Well it's short but I hope that the content makes up for it! ENJOY!

Sorry for any grammar stuff I just really wanted to get it up today because I don't know when I can update again.

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Chapter 6

My head still spinning and Jace supporting 85% of my body I managed to do an awkward bow nod thing. The King then ever so slightly bowed to m-.....WHAT? I yelled to myself. When I looked into his eyes I saw a spark of happiness or something; I was not sure really what it was. The King and the other man then sat down across from us. Jace pulled out my chair and I sat down in it saying a small thank you.

Before any of us could begin talking the waiter came and we all ordered. Well, I was not sure what I was having because my brain was not working, so I just got the same thing as Jace.

"So, Miss Mary Elizabeth," the King began in a strong demanding voice. I really did not want to be called Mary, but this is the king here so I guess I should let him call me what he feels. "Tell me about yourself." He sounded like he truly would like to know. Okay, this is somewhat strange, I thought to myself.

"Well Sir, I am 20, but I have the feeling you already know that." Why did you say that? You stupid, stupid

girl I scolded myself. "Um, I have lived by myself for four years, I work at the same bar as Jace," I looked at Jace to make sure that he was not hiding that part, his face said to continue "I have a sister, three years of age, that stays with me quit often." New fact about myself, when I am around royalty I talk somewhat different. "Other than that, there is nothing special about me at all." I added a sweet smile just for good measure.

"You did not say a word about your dear mother." So he noticed. Shit "What can you tell me about her?" he said like he already knew, but I was not going to disobey the King of some random country.

"Well, Sir. She was once a woman of great intelligence and had a wealthy life." I hated talking about this, but continued. "upon meeting my father," here a go with the strange talking "she feel deep in love. I was the product of that love. I am told that my father had something more important to him than me and my mother. So, he left to perform his duty." I looked up at the king and he looked upset, or sad, I was not sure; he was good at holding in his emotions.

"After this my mother went downhill and I was left to take care of myself. She would go party, drink, and do drugs. You name it; she did or still does it. One of her nights out, she got pregnant with my sister. After that I have tried to keep my sister as much as possible because I don't want her to have to raise herself." I looked up from the table. I could feel the water in my eyes but I fought hard to keep them. The King looked at me with sorrow. But, he did not know me and that lead to pissing me off, but again, he was a King and I have no need to make enemies with a king.

The waiter brought out our food. We began to eat when the king looked up and asked. "Are you angry with your father?" Out of all the questions or comments he had to make, he just had to ask the one that I did not know the answer to.

"Sir, I am going to be blunt and please do not take it the wrong way. I really can't tell you how I feel, for I do not know myself." Again with the talking. I mean what is up? "Part of me wants to rip him apart and scream at him. Another wants to sit down and ask him what the hell is more important than his child

and wife." I took a breath while looking at my food. "But, the biggest part of me wants to find him. Then hug and love him. It wants a father that can be strong so that I don't have to." Our eyes meet and I realized just how alike they were. The different was that his held love and pleading; I looked harder because what could possible make the King love me?

I felt a squeeze on my hand and looked to see Jace was holding my hand. He brought his other hand up to brush something off of my cheek. A tear. Well, fuck. I was crying in front of a King and some kind of top force Agent people. I pulled away from Jace. I was still angry and I did not want to give him the feeling that I would forgive him. Yes, I know I am stubborn; being stubborn got me this far so I was not letting it go.

"I'm so sorry Missy." I heard a weak voice and looked up to see the King had a tear coming down his cheek. "I hope that you can forgive me for the things I have done to your beautiful mother. Most of all I am sorry for the pain I have put you through. I hope that you can find it I your heart to forgive me."

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Sorry! I know it is short but I felt that it was a good place to stop. I need to know.....Is this story original? I am trying to make it different from anything on wattpad. I love vampires and werewolves and stuff but I wanted to have something fresh! So is it???

Comment, Vote, Become a fan!!!!!! Thanks

A special thanks to dominguezg154, Theunknown, Masa_Kaye_Kidd, spanface for becoming fans!!!!!!!!!!

Chapter 7

The Art of Hope (7)

Here it is! Oh and just a heads up this one gets I little steamy and sticky (sexual content)! WOOOHOOO! Ha ha I just wanted to have a little fun! He he!

Recap:

"I'm so sorry Missy." I heard a weak voice and looked up to see the King had a tear coming down his cheek. "I hope that you can forgive me for the things I have done to your beautiful mother. Most of all I am sorry for the pain I have put you though. I hope that you can find it I your heart to forgive me."

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Jace POV

I had never in my 10 years of knowing and working for the king seen him this upset. I had known that protecting his daughter was a big deal, but I did not know the story behind it. I sat there trying to comfort Missy but she just seemed to push me away. I hated that she was still pissed at me. The King and Missy just gawked at one another. Nothing was said for about ten minutes, and I was not going to break the silence.

I looked over at Missy. She was sitting with her mouth agape and her eyes wide in shock. She did not even seem to be breathing. She had dropped her fork on the table with food still on it. I cursed myself in my head for bringing this up tonight, but what could I do? The truth is the only thing that may lead to her forgiving me.

I reached over to take her hand. This time she did not pull away, yet she did not grasp it. I held it as it lay limp in mine.

The King began to speck in a soft voice. I guess he was trying to keep it calm and less shaky, but he was

not doing such a good job. "Missy, I am here because I want you to come home with me. I want you to live in the castle and learn the way of life you should have always known. But," he took in a deep breath "I- if you would like to go on with your life as is and you wish to never see or hear from me again I would completely understand and I will leave you to your life. This is my apology, and the choice is up to you."

Missy seemed to shake herself out of a daze. Looked and her father, to me, and then my hand that was squeezing hers. She pulled her hand away. God, she is so stubborn, I have to admit that it is one of the reasons I am attached to her.

She took in a shaky breath looked the King in the eyes "um, Sir. Are you telling me that I am a" she looked at the table with a look that 5 year olds get when they don't really get something "a-a princess?"

The King stood up. I began to stand, but he motioned for me to sit back down. He stepped over to the side of Missy's chair and crouched down. He looked up at her "Mary Elizabeth you are in line for the throne, but to me you are the daughter that I left. I am not

asking you to become the next queen. I am asking you to let me be a father to you." I was in shock, how could he not ask her to take her roll. If she does not our small kingdom will be given over and the power of the Ventura family will be eliminated.

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Missy POV

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'.....asking you to let me be a father to you." I was shocked. I really had no words I could say. I mean I have always wanted a father. But, This, this whole thing was overwhelming. I could not believe how calm I was being. I mean my life just changed in a matter of two mintues. I sat there with my mouth hanging open like I was a freaking retard. Then it hit me HOLY SHIT I AM A FRUCKING PRINCESS!!!

I looked at the King that I just now found out was my long lost father, then I turned to look at Jace and his father. I took a deep breath trying to cage in the anger, hurt, shock, and hate. "I-I. I-I really need some time to think about all this." I stood from my chair

"thanks for the dinner."I spoke in a rushed voice and then I walked out of the restaurant. As soon as I hit the doors I ran, ran more, and just kept running. I ran until my feet killed me. Seeing as I was in pumps I did not run very far. I looked around to find that I was in town across from the bar I worked at; in front of the club. I could hear the music thumping as I leaned against the cold brick wall trying to calm myself. How could this be happening to me? Should I be happy? Should I go? What about Katie?

I needed to get my mind off of this. I decided I would dance and drink away my problems tonight. I know it sounds so cliché but it really does help at the time, and that is all I needed right now just to forget for a moment.

I did not have my wallet or anything, but luckily I was well known from working at the bar and got in. I went straight to the dance floor. They had some random techno music playing. I found myself in the middle of the dance floor moving my body to the music with not a care in the world. I felt hard muscular hands on my waist. I turned to find the

most gorgeous man on the face of the earth. He stood about a foot taller than me, which I find amazingly attractive in the first place. He was huge but not fat, just built. He had a golden brown tan that engulfed his exceptionally muscular body; it was not a gross muscular but it was just right. He looked like he could carry me for days and not break a sweet. He had dirty blond hair that was just long enough to fist your hands in. His eyes were what caught my attention the most. They were grey, but not a bull grey, more like a sliver with a hint of blue kind of grey, that would shimmer in the sun.

I broke out my hot and steamy dance moves. I hate to say it, but I could easily be mistaking as an exotic dancer with the moves I can do. I had turned around with my back against his 8 pack. I was slowly grinding myself into him, while letting go of all my frustration. I felt the music pulse though my body and I just could not stop. I love how powerful I fell when dancing, like I have everything under control.

I felt his strong arms around me as he suddenly turned me around. He slid on of is thighs between

my legs and began to grind into me Dirty Dancing style. It drove me wild that I had found such an amazing dance partner. He leaned down to talk into my ear (so I could hear over the loud music) "Let's get a drink!" his accent drove me insane. It was British...French...? A mix almost and let me tell you it turned me on. If I was the one night stand kind of gal he would totally get in my pants tonight.

"Sure, I would love to." I tried to hide the huskiness but it really did not work. He just gave me a crooked smirk and held my waist as he guided me to the bar.

"I'll just have a beer, and give her a...." he was rude, but I had no time to think of that as I got lost in the sound of his voice for a second.

"Um, just give me a Martini." Looked over and up at the god sitting next to me.

"So, what brings you to the club?" He asked as if I should not be here.

"Um, I just wanted to dance is that so wrong?" I kind of snapped at him, even though I did not mean to.

"Well, to tell you the truth you look like you should be at a dinner party, but you make up for it with you stripper dancing." He said with a wink. Yep, he is a freaking jerk.

The waiter came back with our drinks and I downed mine without saying a word; I was here to forget and that is what I am going to fucking do. When sexy man was done with his drink I pulled him on the dance floor and we proceeded with the grinding.

I leaned into him I could tell I was just a little tipsy. I never was much of a drinker, and I'll admit I'm a light weight "Um. I have to go to the little girls' room." I was still speaking clear so that was a good sign.

I went in the bathroom, fixed my hair, and did my stuff. I realized that at some point I had lost my jacket and was just in my white strapless dress. When I came out he was waiting for me. I did not expect him to. He looked me up and down. Lust full in his eyes.

"Hey, babe. I'm sick of dancing. What do you say we go over to my place?" don't tempt me I said to myself.

"Well, babe." I said copying his voice, "I would love to but I have to get back to mine."

He took a step forward and I took one back but bumped into the wall. I looked up and finally meet his eyes; He had his hands on either side of me, as he began to lean in. I turned my head just in time.

"I'm really sorry but I really need to be getting home. It was splendid dancing with you." I ducked around him and started to the door. He did not say a word so I guessed he went back in the club to find someone to dance with.

When I got outside I realized that I had no way home so I just started walking. After not even walking 3 yards I stopped. My feet killed me; I bent down to take off my shoes when a beep from a car stopped me in my tracks. I looked up to see that it was a freaking 911 Carrera 4 Porsche. I just stood there half bent over my mouth hanging open at the beautiful car. The window rolled down, and I god like face was pulled into a smirk. "Yeah, sexy. It looks like you need a ride." He winked.

What the hell I thought to myself. I have gotten drunk (well, I tried), I have danced the night away, so what is a one night stand? "Um, thanks." I got into the car. I just want to clarify I have never ever slept with someone before. I have made love but never just had sex for the fun of it. I was in the mood to explore tonight.

The ride was quiet, with me doing the only talking by giving directions. I got out of the car and walked to the door looking for my key that I had tucked in my bra. I heard a car door shut, and then felt his body heat up against mine. I unlocked to door. The second I opened it he was on top of me. Wow, he got right down to business.

He began to nibble on my bottom lip trying to get in. I did not let him but that made him work harder. He thrust our bodies against to wall. Then he traced his tongue along my bottom lip, and I could not hold out any longer. Our mouths worked together eagerly. Still kissing me he pulled my legs around his waist. My hands went around his neck to hold my lips in place

as he did so. His head pulled away suddenly "Names Eric by the way" his voice full of lust.

"Yeah, whatever" I took in two deep breaths to get out the rest "Mines Missy" and went back to kissing him.

He broke the kiss to work his way along my jaw line and to my ear lobe. He trailed his kisses down and nipped at the soft spot of my neck. I took in a sharp breath and arched my back as best I could, with me being pressed up against the wall; this movement kind of thrust me into him a little. A deep dark rumble came from him as he grinded into me I could feel his hard hit just the right spot between my legs. I clenched my fists around the flesh on his shoulders and let out a whimper like moan. WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING? Screamed the voice inside my head, but I just could not stop; it felt so fucking good to let go, to give in.

He slid his hand between my back and the wall, finding my zipper and slowly pulled it down. All the while nipping and sucking on my neck causing my breathing to come in sharp shallow gasps. My dress

began to slide down my body, as Eric, had a field day with my cleavage. My unsteady hands worked on the buttons, but they got nowhere because we were so close. He pulled away for a second "bed!" his voice so husky it was hard to hear him. It was not a question it was a 'WHERE THE HELL IS THE FUCKING BED OR I WILL HAVE YOU ON THE FLOOR' command.

"Down the hall on the left" I was surprised that he could understand me. I could hardly understand myself between all the panting and huskiness in my voice. He carried me easily until I returned to favor of nibbling on his neck. I felt his legs go weak for a second, all his energy going to his hard. He practically threw me on the bed. He pulled down his pants to expose his silky boxers that seemed to be doing more work than usual. He pulled off his shirt; my eyes got lost in his muscles. He was perfectly chiseled, muscles wrapped his arm as he flexed (knowing I was looking), his abs, ah no words could really describe them. But, the line off his hips sent me into a state of ecstasy.

He hovered over top of me; then kissed my neck working his way down while pulling my dress off. I uncontrollably tilted my head back. I felt a firm hand on my thigh being slowly trickling down my leg then he pulled my shoes of slowly. I looked down, and he looked up at me with his stunning grey eyes. He began to kiss his way up my leg, sending a flash of heat with every kiss. He brought his kisses to my neck once more and it drove me nuts. "Eric" I groaned breathlessly.

I could not take it; I worked my hands down to his boxers to pull them off, but he was crushed up against me so hard that they would not move. His hands slid behind me and unclasped my bra. He pulled back to practically rip it off. He went on kissing my lips then trailed down to my nipple. He gently rubbed his tongue over it; every muscle in my body tensed and my hands fisted in his hair. I wrapped my legs around him and his hard hit in just the right spot that I let out a deep, almost disturbing moan, and to my embarrassment I cried out "Get the fucking boxers off!"

He stood up to take them off when the house phone rang. He stopped and looked out my bedroom door, then back to me. "Let it ring" I said eyeing him. If he fucking stopped now I would go mad. He listened and began slowly pulling them off, just to patronize me. The answering machine picked up and a troubled voice rang though the house. "Missy, Missy, Fuck, are you there? Well, I am coming to see if you are." Then he hung up.

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I know, I know! It's a little much, but I wanted the intro of a new character to be memorable. So why not have a little fun?????

Next chapter will fill you in on what Missy will do and how Jace takes her little fiasco!

As always Vote, Comment, and tell a friend!!!

Chapter 8

The Art of Hope (8)

Recap:

He stood up to take them off when the house phone rang. He stopped and looked out my bedroom door, then back to me. "Let it ring" I said eyeing him. If he fucking stopped now I would go mad. He listened and began slowly pulling them off, just to patronize me. The answering machine picked up and a troubled voice rang though the house. "Missy, Missy, Fuck, are you there? Well, I am coming to see if you are." Then he hung up.

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Chapter 8

Jace POV

I drove 85 mph just to get to her house. I still was not there yet. The King had wanted me to give her time to cool down, I did, but it has been almost three hours. The King was now at the hotel, safe and sound, so I was free to check on her. I knew it was a bad idea to tell her now. I knew she would run. But, like I said before, she had a right to know. My cell rang bringing me back to the present.

"Hello?" I asked, forgetting to look at the ID.

"Um, Jace" It was Missy. I slowly let out a breath. Thank God she was ok.

"Oh, Missy. I am so glad you are ok. I am on my way over right now."

"Um, Jace. I am fine-" I heard a deep intake of breath and then I deep husky moan. Anger flooded through my body turning me hot with rage. Who the hell was with Missy right now? My hand gripped the steering wheel and my foot pressed down on the gas a little more, causing the truck the reach over 90. "Stop it,

I'm on the phone." I heard her say to him. She tried to muffle it put I heard loud and clear.

"Missy, I will be there in 6 minutes," I heard her moan. How could she fucking have sex while on the phone with me. This is not the Missy I know. "Missy, 6 minutes and get that fucking piece of shit man out of your house before I get there, or, or..... " My voice was cold and hard. But, I did not know what to say after that.

"Jace," irritation clear in her voice "I don't see why you fucking care." My heart stopped for a second and I had trouble finding my lungs. How could she not see that I fucking care? Every moment of my life I was around her I did what I could to protect her and care for her.

"I will be there in 6 minutes if you like it or not." With that I hung up and proceeded to speed faster.

I speed down the road to find that I was only 3 minutes away. As I pulled into the drive a black Porsche was pulling out. Not caring I jerked my keys out and slammed my door. Then I proceeded to stomp to her front door the flung it open. There she

was sitting on the couch with just an oversized tee on, her hair all over the place, and her lips swollen and red looking at me with so much hate that I almost lost my breath.

"So, Jace," she said calmly with her teeth clenched, fists tight, and body tensed. "What the fucking hell do you want?" She let a little more anger seep in the last part. Damn, she had no clue how much authority she had, just like her father.

I quickly remembered that I was completely pissed at her. "Well, seeing as I don't fucking care about you. I have no fucking idea." Never in my life have I ever used such foul language in front of a lady. Well, just goes to show that she has that much control over me.

"Well great. Now get the hell out of my house. You've done what you came here to do, so just get the hell out." Done what I have came here to do? What? I don't understand what she is talking about.

My voice came out questioning. "Done what I have came here to do? What the hell are you talking about Missy?"

"Shit, do you think I am that stupid? You are out to make my life a living hell aren't you. First, the two years that I have fucking known you has been a complete lie. Then, the one night when I do as I feel, and try to just forget, you come in and smash it all to bits." Ours eyes meet, hers were ice cold. She had meant every word that came out of her mouth. She fucking hated me. I felt my heart drop, and every ounce of hope left me.

"Well, I am sorry you feel that way, but you are completely wrong. I came here tonight to see how you were doing. I know that it was too much to take at one time. The King is killing himself over this for years now. He just wants to make it right the best way he knows how. Um, and I am sorry for messing your night up.....I guess." Truth was, that was the only thing that made me happy today. "No," I was not sorry not an ounce. My voice grew with anger "I am not fucking sorry! I am not going to let you turn yourself into a slut just because you need to get you mind off of something." I took in a deep breath bringing myself back to my calm state. "I guess I will leave," I turned to leave then It hit me that I forgot

something "Oh," I handed her a card with the contact information of the King on it. "this is the contact information. No matter what you decide to do the King would like to know what you have picked. He is leavening in a week. That is not a time limit; it's just that if you want to go over there anytime soon it would be best to go with him when he goes back." I did not look at her; I just turned and walked out the door, knowing that it may be the last time I may ever see her.

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Missy POV

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He turned and walked away without saying a word. Something felt too final about that moment. This was a turning point for me. Right now, at this moment I had to make a choice. I could make my life better or I could keep as it is.

I sat there in the same position as when Jace had left staring at the card in my hand. I didn't know how

much time had passed, but my eyes began to grow weak.....

I woke up on the couch holding the card. My muscles stiff and my neck throbbing. I stood up; I just did not feel like myself. I just pushed all that I had to think about in the back of my mind. I would think about it later I told myself.

I fixed myself a bowl of cereal and sat down at the table. I ended up not eating because the cereal reminded me of how I was feeling, cold and soggy. I decided to take a hot shower.

I turned the hot water all the way on. Steam flooded to bathroom and fogged up the mirror. I slowly stripped of my t-shirt and underwear. I stepped into the shower, the drops of water hitting my face, sending ever muscle into relaxation. I put a drop of shampoo, Mango, and soaped up my hair riding it of any tangles Eric had caused. HOLY FUCK, I almost slept with some guy that had amazing dance moves last night!

I clasped my hand over my heart, trying to regulate my breathing. I felt my eyes well up. Oh. My. God.

Jace was right, I was turning into a slut. How did I even face him last night? I did not have an ounce of right to go off on him. I shook the tears away; crying never helps.

From that point I knew what I had to do. I quickly showered and dressed. I put on a yellow sun dress wit a white jacket and shoes. Left my curly hair down, and put on some light makeup.

I dialed work "Hey, boss something has come up and I won't be able to work today." I crossed my fingers hopping he is feeling nice.

"Well, shit." Not good "first, you cause my son a broken nose, then you can't work!"

"How in the hell is that my fucking fault?" I screamed into the phone. "HE. WAS. FUCKING. RAPING ME!" I spoke each word loud and clear, letting my new found authority ring in his ears.

Not a sound came from the line "And, by the way. I quit," and I hung up the phone. I felt...free? Is that what it was? Well, whatever it was I loved it. I smiled to myself. I was liking this new Missy!

I went to the couch and picked up the card with my new found fathers name on it. I held the phone and slowly punched in the numbers.

"Hello?" It was a strong male voice. Was this the king picking up his own phone? "Hello?" he sounded annoyed.

"Um, yes. This is Missy. I was wondering if I could speak with the King?" I sounded nervous. Well, I was.

"Missy?" his voice sounded shaky and happy. "Oh, Missy I am so glad that you called. I'm so very sorry. I hope that you can forgive me. I did not mean it. Have you made up your mind?" He was talking so fast I did not have time to speak. I let out a small chuckle, we sounded so alike. That made a smile cross my lips. Wow I was smiling a lot today.

"Well, I was wondering if I could speak with you? In person that is," I wanted to clear some things up before I made this choice.

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Ok I know it was a longer wait and I am so very sorry. Good news is that I have already started on the

next chapter, and the whole thing is going to be from Jace's POV!

Chapter 9

The Art of Hope (9)

Chapter 9

Here we go.....

Jace POV

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

I had gotten a call from the King that I was to attend Dinner with him and Missy. I had told him it was not a good idea but I was the only agent that could stay in the room seeing as I knew everything.

I could not be more proud of Missy. She was not running away. I hoped so much that I had something to do with that. I wanted to speak to her to tell her

that I was sorry. Tell her I did not think she was becoming a slut, but tonight was her and her Father's night. They needed to work things out.

We arrived at her house to pick her up. The driver went around opening the door.

As the door opened I saw her in all her glory. She was wearing a yellow sun dress. It hugged her curves in exotic ways. Her breasts slightly peeped over the top, which she really could not help, they were just rather large. She walked with powerful stride, her hips swaying seductively from side to side. Her white pumps elongated her legs; what got me the most is she did not even realize how magnificent she really was. I pulled my eyes away. If I looked any longer I would have to take a cold shower.

I had to catch one last glance as she got in. Her face held surprise and sorrow when she was me.

"Missy," the King began "I am so glad you came. Sit across from me so we can talk." He motioned to the seat next to me. I turned my head to look out the window. I could not face her after I practically called her a slut, which she was not.

She sat as far from me as possible; I did not blame her. "I am sorry for running off last night, Sir," She took a breath "I was having a hard time taking the news, It was terribly cowardly of me." I could not help but look at her after that statement. She did not even seem to know I was there.

"Now, Missy. I am your father, not Sir. And as for running off, well, we all do things we regret." His face held sadness. Missy and I both knew what he was talking about. "So, I find it easy to forgive." I could feel the happiness radiate from him. He was so pleased that she had come.

The two chatted about Missy's work, friends, and other sorts of things. I knew that the hard questions would be asked over dinner. With all my heart I hoped that she would make up her mind to come back with us. I don't know if I could stay away from her to tell you the truth.

We made it to the restaurant that the King had booked just for us. I saw her eyes grow wide.

The first half of the meal was quiet. I would glance at her as she ate. A few times I thought she was going to

say something, but she closed her mouth again. She was halfway done with her meal when she put down her fork and placed her hands in her lap. I wanted so badly to reach out and hold one, but I knew it was a bad idea.

"I just have some questions I want to ask. So, hypothetically speaking, If I said yes what would I be doing if I moved in with you." Jolts of glee ran through my body threatening to make me jump with joy, but she had not really said yes. The good news was she was thinking about it. I glanced at the King to see the same hope in his eyes.

"Well, for the first few months you would live in the guest wing. There you would learn the ins and outs of the laws, your family history, the makings of becoming a Queen, which is completely up to you, and also have your room in the family wing worked on." He smiled thinking about it.

"Ok..." her voice was soft, like she was in deep thought "What about Katie? And, my best friend is getting married in 2 months; I am her maid of honor so I kind of have to go." She looked up at the King,

hope in her eyes that Katie could come. I knew that heartache was about to lay a blanket upon her.

"Well as for your friend, yes you may go to her wedding because at that time not a soul will know that you are the princess." Here it comes I spoke in my head, turning away. I did not want to see her heart break in front of me. "But, Missy," his words sad and caring "You cannot bring your sister she does not have royalty in her blood. For her there is nothing I can do." I heard her take in a sharp breath then hold it there for sometime before letting it go.

"Then," her tone weak but strong at the same time "I am afraid I will have to say no. I am sorry for letting you down, but I cannot let my sister suffer the life I had to." She slowly stood up bowed her head and walked to the door. For the second time I saw Missy walk away from what was rightfully hers. The difference was, this time she was not running but doing the right thing. Her sister needed her.

"I think you should let her bring her sister." I had never taken it upon myself to tell the King what he should do, but this time it was needed.

"And how am I to make that happen." He was angry but the sadness of his daughter walking out on him was stronger.

"You," I put a pause "Are the King. You, can make it happen." He did not speak so I continued. "Missy is not going to go anywhere without her sister. At least let her come visit a week out of the month. You may have known her mother at one time. But, right now her mother is not a person that a three year old child can live with."

With that I stood and walked out of the doors and to the black car that fallowed the King to the dinner and told one of the agents to take over for me.

I spotted Missy sanding with her head down leaned against a building. I began to walk to her. I had to admit I was a little scared of what she would say, but she needed me and I promised I would be there for her.

I stood in front of her. I knew she knew I was there, but I waited until she was ready to talk. She took a deep, calming breath and looked up at me. Her eyes gazed into mine. I could see the tears in her eyes. She

was fighting, and fighting hard not to break. "I," she stopped knowing she would break if she continued, and then she began "Jace, I am sorry. I just can't leave her here. I want to make my life better, but not without Katie. She is the only person that I truly love and trust." Ouch that hurt a little. "But, but" She was searching for the right words. "I-, I," still not finding them. "I just don't know what I am going to do. The rent, a new roommate, and fuck I quit, so I have no job." I was shocked and happy. Thank God she had quit.

"Missy," I took her face into my hands. "You did the right thing." Then one single lonely tear ran down her face. I took my thumb and brushed it away.

"Jace, I just want to say thank you. For last night that is, and your right I was acting like a slut." Anger flooded through me, at myself of course.

"No," my words came out hard, and I felt her pull away from me. I held her face still "You. Are. Not. A. Slut. I was wrong and angry and should have never said that." She did not say anything for a long time.

"What am I going to do?" She asked me exploring my eyes.

"You sit tight; I am going to work everything out." I saw her eyes light up with hope. Well, a lot of hope was going around today.

She beamed at me for the first time in a long time. Then she bit her lip and frowned. Over what I did not know and did not care. I leaned in looking at her lips, so full and pink with cherry lip balm. She sucked in air but did not pull away. I closed the space kissing her lightly. Warm vibrations running from my lips to every part of my body I held it there as long as I could. Then I slowly, taking in her taste, ran my tongue across her lips begging for entrance. After running it back she lightly parted her lips. I slid my tongue in and across her teeth. Then our tongues united dancing in her mouth. My hands that once were on her face slid down to her hips. Her hands slid to my neck pulling me close. Every place her skin touched me heat radiated.

"Jace, Um the King is on his way out you may want to break it off." I knew the voice from that agent I had

asked to take over from me. I hesitantly pulled away from her.

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Ok guys that what I have for Chapter 9! A thanks to my new fans! Loves ya!

Enjoy, vote, comment, and tell a friend! ⏪

Thanks, newhope!

Chapter 10

The Art of Hope (10)

Chapter 10

Missy's POV

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

I have not spoken with Jace or the King in two days. I was starting to wonder if he even talked to my father. I surprised myself on how much I really wanted to go. I knew that it would be hard and that I would be looked down upon as the King's Daughter of a one nightstand, but a part of me longed, need, and felt that this was my calling. I wanted to go.

I was on my way to work to pick up my last check when my cell rang. I glance at it, it was Jace. I got jittery this was the moment I had been waiting for. "Hello," I sounded nervous but excited.

"Missy, Hey. How are you?" He questioned, but I could hear the smile in his voice, so I started to get eager.

"OH, Jace!" I yipped. "You did it. Oh, Jace thank you!" I could hardly drive my hand shaking with happiness.

"I have made and arrangement. I would like to talk to you about it over dinner." I could hear the optimism in his voice; it caused a small blush on my cheeks.

"An arrangement? Well, that does call for a dinner." I said trying to keep the excitement from seeping through.

"Pick you up at 7:00 then? How about we eat somewhere nice?"

"Yes, 7:00 "

I drove the rest of the way to work. When I got there I stood there looking at it for a second smiling to

myself. I was out of here, even if things did not work out I could work somewhere else. I started to wonder why I stayed with it for so long. I shrugged and walked into the bar for the first time not as an employee.

The second my foot stepped through the door I regretted my choice of outfit of tank and a pair of cheer shorts. There he stood, the man that molested me, but I past him sliming. He still had his nose bandaged, and I tried not to chuckle but I could not help it.

"What's so funny Missy?" he said in anger.

"Well, I don't know, Ben," I turned to smirk at him "It could be that fact that you are all bandaged up. Never could get you way could you. That's why you work for you father." I just stared at him rage in my eyes. I would love to see him try to cross me now, with my new found authority and all.

"Really?" He questioned in a dark tone. I instantly regretted every word I had said.

"Yes, Really," for some reason I could not get the smart ass comments to stop coming. "Now, I am here to pick up my check. Where's the boss?"

A large, conniving grin spread across his face. "He's out!" Panic froze me in place. Come on Missy you can take him. I told myself, but my pep talk did not allow my body to move.

He was over at me in a flash pressing me to the wall. I my breath caught in my chest. He ran one hand from a collar bone down my body briefly stopping at my breast. Jolts of fury wound throughout my body, causing my frozen posture to burn in rage. I could feel every muscle, bone, and ever hair that stood on end.

I gave him a smirk. Taking it the wrong way, he pressed me to the wall more before chuckling "I knew you would give in." Fat chance I told myself. I brought my hands to rest on his chest. He leaned in closer. With every ounce of strength I had, I shoved him off of me. He staggered back about four steps. I took to large strides and pulled back and punched

him in his already broken nose causing, him to fall backwards to the ground.

"Let me show you how I dance, pretty boy!" My voice cold and hard, I kicked him in his manhood. He cried out in pain grabbing himself. I pulled his weak arms away straddling him. I brought his ear up to my lips using the collar of his shirt "If I ever, ever hear or find you have been playing around with another woman. I Will hunt you down, and you will be sorry that you ever touched me." I shoved him to the floor.

I went to the back room to look at the boss's desk. There lay my last paycheck. Not even caring to leave a note, I grabbed it a stalked out of the bar.

It was 7:00. I was dressed in a slinky black dress. It had no straps, and with my breasts had not the need for them. And I was feeling a little promiscuous after my fight today, so I skipped the bra and just relied on the lining of the dress. It hugged my body all the way down to just below my knees. I put on the same black pumps I had worn the first time I had meet the King, silently pleading things would not end the same again.

I placed my hair on top of my head in a twist bun, with small ringlets falling around my face. As always I put on light natural makeup, but added a darker pink lip balm.

I heard a knock at the door; nerves flew throughout my entire body. Slowly I opened the door and had a shot of déjà vu. He was dressed in a similar outfit as before. Button up shirt and dark jeans. He glanced at my dress and quickly looked at my face. He held his face in composure, but he had a glint of lust in his eyes.

"You ready?" he questioned, keeping eye contact.

"Yeah just let me lock the door." I took out my single key. Locked it. Then I placed it in my cleavage keeping it nicely hidden by my breast. I looked up to see Jace eyeing me, one eyebrow raised. "Well, were else should I put it," I said while shrugging. He just smiled and let out a small chuckle. Then I looked up and saw his big ass truck and stopped died in my tracks. I glance down at my dress and then back up to the truck. "Damn," I muttered to myself.

"Don't worry, I'll help ya," he winked.

"Thanks, but I think I can handle it." I said shyly with a smile. I walked over to the truck, he fallowed. I rolled my dress up to my upper thigh and scaffold into the truck seat. I straighten out my dress and looked over at Jace with a small smirk. His face held shock, then shook his head and walked around to his side of the truck.

It was a fairly quite ride, but not awkward. Halfway through it he reached out and took my hand, rubbing light circles on it, it comforted me.

He took us to a fancy five star restaurant. It was warm and inviting with its creams and browns. The waiter took us past all the dining areas and to an excluded balcony. The table was set with a dark maroon cloth and cream china. Candles eliminated every corner, flickering, setting the mood. I took in a large breath, found it did not reach my lungs, my throat had caught. I felt an overwhelming sense of joy, and my eyes began to cloud up. In my whole life no one had ever done such a wonderfully romantic thing for me.

I glance at Jace, his lop sided smile was warm and caring. The waiter had left and we were alone. "Thank you," I choked out.

"No, Missy," he said his eyes holding something I had never seen before, "Thank you." He leaned in and kissed me on the forehead, causing a smile of contentment to cross my lips. Rapping his arm around me, he led me to my chair, pulling it out like a gentleman.

I ordered some kind of fancy fish, while he ordered a fancy steak.

"There is something different about you today, like you're unbreakable." He had a questioning look, but eyes held pleasure.

"Well, I had a very good day. I feel... I can do anything," I could not shake the thought that I, that I had stood up for myself.

"What brought this on?" he asked with a crooked grin, then placed steak in his mouth. My eyes got distracted by his lips when he licked the sauce off. "Well..." my eyes unwillingly looked away.

"Well, let's just say Ben won't be messing with me again," I beamed at the thought of him falling from my punch.

"What did he do?" He asked with clench teeth and narrow eyes. I reached my hand to his, and began gingerly rubbing circles on it.

"Don't worry," I cooed "I re-broke his nose and caused having babies to be a problem." His eyes went wide, then he beamed.

"Guess you showed him," he took my hand and gently kissed it, tingles shooting up my arm and to my heart. Then I suddenly remembered what it was we had come for.

"Ok, so what about Katie?" I asked jittery. His beam turned in to a scowl. Oh, no I thought as my heart speed.

"Well, I have good and bad news." I nodded telling him the bad first.

"She cannot stay, but you can come visit her one week out of every month." He peeked at me through his eyelashes.

"Jace, I..." he placed his index finger on my lips, then went to cupping my face and running his thumb across them. I felt so good, my lips parted unconsciously wanting more. Shit, pay attention, Missy.

"Shh, Missy," he had a small grin on his lips "The King is going to try his best to talk your mom into letting her move in with you. But, until then you are going to have to stand a week a month." I just started at him in shock. My brain slowly taking in every word, it hit me, she can come.

"Oh, Jace," I screamed and his grin widened. I jumped up and hugged him, tears of joy trailed down my face. I did not know the words to say so I let my actions do all the talking. It seems his did too. His strong arms pulled me into his lap. He leaned in, inches from my face, gazing at my lips intently, and I at his. He closed the distance slowly. His warm lips came to mine, holding them there for a second. I gave him entrance when he sucked on my bottom lip diligently. My arms snaked around his neck, his pulling my waist closer. "Oh," a waiter had walked in

on our celebration. "Please, excuse me..." he mumbled nervously, Jace and I pulled away me, I blushing, and him smirking.

"Oh, no you're fine," I stumbled as I got up.

The rest of the light went along with glee. We rode home as much the same as the way there. Holding hands like we had been together forever.

Jace, being the gentleman he is, walked me to my door.

"I had such a great time. The King is leaving in two days, right?" He nodded his head. "Well, I don't think that I am going to have everything packed." I had a lot of stuff that needed a new home and I wanted to ask around.

His hand found the small of my back and pulled me to him. "I'll see what I can work out. Maybe the King will allow you and me to stay behind to get everything squared away." What he said was fine by me. But I knew he was not thinking about what he was saying, he had too much heat in his eyes. I just

nodded my head, trying slow my breath. This made him smirk. He was doing a lot of that tonight.

"Um, thanks Jace I'll see you tomorrow to pack?" I asked trying to break away from his embrace. Don't get me wrong, I wanted him, oh, how I wanted him, but I was a new girl. I was not going to rush things anymore.

He just nodded his head, then placed his forehead to mine; his warm breath fanning across my lips. He gently kissed me on the lips. I held them there for a second, but then pulled away, reaching for my key, still hidden by my breasts.

He grabbed my hand. "Let me help you..." his voice heavy with lust. A strong hand ran from my waist up to cross my cheats. I involuntarily shuddered. No, my inner voice cried. I cannot do this. My hand pulled up to stop him just as his fingers went to dive in. His face looked at me with longing; I gave a small, shy smile shaking my head.

"No," my voice was soft.

"Ok," he spoke, but his eyes held hurt. I instantly regretted stopping him.

"I don't want to rush things," I made sure he was looking at me, "I don't want to be THAT girl, the girl I used to be, the one that fell to fast, and got broken." His eyes went soft.

"I understand, I just... your dress... I just thought," oh shit this was my fault.

"I know, I just was feeling a little... promiscuous," I looked down shyly, knowing now that I was leading him on.

I made sure to call Annie telling her I had found a house out of state, but that I would be back the week of her wedding. She insisted that I stay with her and that she could have Jace's address to invite him. I told her about our date. She was saddened that I had not gone 'all the way' with him.

Now it was time for the hard part. I had to go tell my sister good bye. It was killing me. All I could remember from our phone call was her crying for me not to go. I kept telling myself that it was not the

end of the world, that I would come to see her again, and that she would come to live with me.

I was nervous on the ride over to my mother's. I could not breath right, my mind kept replaying the her voice begging me not to go. It was all I could do to fight the tears. I thanked God Jace was driving. We pulled in the drive and we sat there for some time before he spoke.

"I am going to run some errands. I will be back in 15. Okay?" He felt that it was not his place to come in.

I just nodded my head and stepped out of the car. I knocked on the door while taking deep breaths to calm myself. Mother answered the door. I could not help but get angry as I saw the foreign glint in her eyes. She was stoned. I walked past her without a word, looking for Katie. I found her in her room playing with some old toys of mine. Mom never did get her, her own. She used all the money on whatever she could get her hands on at the moment.

"Katie" I whispered.

She looked up at me with sorrow in her eyes, as if someone had died. I felt a ping of hurt jut though my heart, as if someone had stabbed me. I ran to her, pulling her up into a hug.

"I love you. And I am very sorry that I am leaving. I need to go. I promise you that I will be back. I will stay with you and we can go to the zoo." She always did love the zoo. I felt her shudder as she began to cry.

"Pweze, don't go!" she shook with every sob. I felt my eyes begin to burn and my heart tighten. I single tear feel and tthe waterworks came. I really did not want to cry. I wanted to comfort her, but I had no words. And so, I just held her until I heard a beep from Jace's car. I lowered her to the ground us both gasping for breath between each sob.

"I love you, and I WILL be back." I promised her once more before kissing her on the cheek,

"I wuvs you too." She sputtered out.

I walked though the house trying to get the tears back in their box. My mother's words stopped me in my tracks.

"So that's why you're leaving." I looked up to see her looking out the window at Jace's car. "He sure is a looker. What he do, knock you up?" She smirked. I ignored her as I walked by. "You know I always knew you would turn into a whore and leave you old mother here to die." Her voice was cold and I stopped in my tracks to glare at her. The last words out of her mouth almost killed me. "You always were good for nothing," It did not matter how many times I heard it, it always broke my heart just a little more. I sucked in a breath to keep the tears in.

I turned to walk away not wanting to fight; I felt another tear roll down my cheek. This one was for me. She had finally done it. She had broken me to tears. Never again would I cry over her. NEVER.

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So, here it is.

I am having trouble getting the next one out. I have started on it. I was going to make it part of this one but it is taking so long for me to write that I cut it up. I know how the story is going to play out, but I can't get from point A to point B.

What I am trying to say is, I don't know how long it is going to take me to get the next one out. I'm I little burnt out. I need motivation so give it to me lol!

Well, like always. Enjoy, vote, comment, tell a friend. And don't be afraid to ask me questions!

Chapter 11

The Art of Hope (11)

Sorry for the wait guys! Here it is.

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Chapter 11

Missy's POV

I walk through the halls of the guest wing; it's 2:00 a.m. The light of the full moon shines through the window, giving the hall a mysterious dark glow. I have been here one week; I still can't grasp the fact that this is my new life. The past week has been pretty much boring. The King wanted to give me time to relax and prepare myself for the studies to come.

Yeah, right! Seeing as I have not slept a full night's sleep in the whole week I have been here, it is funny he thinks that. I could not get the thought of Katie, at home with my mother, all alone, and without me out of my head. I felt so guilty, so wrong, and I thought that I should be with her now. But no, I just HAD to come here; I just had to do what I wanted, and because of that I felt so damn selfish.

Jace and I have not seen one another in the whole week I have been here. I was still a little angry with him for not telling me the truth. I walked past my neighbor's door. He was some prince of my father's friend. His brother was in line to be King and he moved in with my father to help with his kingdom, because he had no one. Just like me; Well, I did have Katie. I had yet to see him he went with Jace on his assignment to the States. My mind flickered back to that last conversation I had with Jace.

I remember it perfectly.

"Missy, listen to me. There is something I need you to know," he had said in his deep meaningful tone.

"Okay, listening." I had said in an offhand tone as I traced my lips along his jaw. He shuddered under me, causing me to smile.

"Stop distracting me," he moaned. I remember that was when he sat up and pulled me off of his chest. We were in his room on his bed about the same time of night as it is now. "I need you to know something..." he trailed off.

"I'm listening, just spit it out already." I was annoyed he had stopped our make out session.

"Well, I am sure you are wondering why," taking a breath then continuing "the only time I have talked to you all day is now at 2:00 in the morning."

I nodded my head. I was wondering, but I thought it was because of his job. "Well, you have your job. So, I just like that we can spend this time together now." I leaned in to kiss lips. I got nothing in return, so I pulled back with a questioning look.

"Well... It's... um... Kind of not, aloud... for, um... me to," he looked up into my eyes and stating the ending

of his stutter with words running together, "have-a-relationship-with-you."

I sat there with my mouth agape. I had, had no words that could form in my head. I just stared at him, disbelieving in my eyes. He had lied to me AGAIN. I was extremely upset that he did, but what I hated most is that I had found such a great thing and it's off limits. Not to mention the fact that we could be separated by it. Well, what did I expect? Nothing ever came easy for me.

I looked out of the window at the garden covered with a blanket of gray, cast from the moon. After that I had left Jace in his room, without a word, and him yelling my name. I was mad, yes, but I needed to get my thoughts together. We could fight this. Right?

I had woken up the next morning to find him, so that we could talk. I found that Jace was on an assignment back in the states, and would not be back until tonight. Now, I was waiting for him.

I continued to walk down the halls. Just thinking about all this stuff and how it came from nowhere. When I heard a steady thump of what sounded like

rap music coming from the servant wing. I had never been to this part of the castle before, so inquisitiveness quickly took over. I crept up to the door. I could hear the muffled voices, the clanking of glasses and some rap music, that I could not make the words out to.

"Missy?" I heard a female voice from behind me."What are you doing here, you crazy girl?"

Thank god, it was Emily, my closest friend here. She was a servant, well my servant. I really liked her. She was so sweet and kind, but she had a sassy side to her also. "I was just walking and you know how I love to dance. I heard the music and I just had to check it out."

"You are going to get me in so much trouble. You are not even aloud to be in the side of the castle," she huffed.

"Please," I begged with my puppy dog eyes.

"Fine," she groaned as I jumped with triumph.

We entered to makeshift club; the lights flashing and the deep bass of that Lil' Wayne song "Got Money"

bouncing though the speakers. I dragged Emily by the hand to the dance floor. I felt the first genuine smile cross my lips as I grinded to the soothing bass. I kept my eyes closed in a daze wishing I was back home and free to dance with anyone I wanted. I knew here I could not; it would cause so many problems, with me being the one and only princess of the King.

I felt more than one pair of masculine arms wrap around me. I nicely pulled away; not wanting to get a fight started. In the back of my mind I was wishing that I had a great dance partner like the last time. What was his name? Eric, Right? I felt big hands on my hips and I turned around to see a short man with great blond hair. He really was not handsome, but that was not why I was pulling away. I just was not going to dig myself into a hole. As I pulled away I saw him give me the eye. I shivered with disgust and then remembered what I was wearing. Note, next time wear a little more than my spandex shorts and a camisole. I glance around to find where I could get a drink. And there, at a table full of brinks, was a man just 3 or 4 inches taller than me, with dark hair and

muscles that I knew so very well. "Jace!" I yipped and ran over to him.

"Missy? WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?" He yelled in irritation. I was taken aback. What had I done? I almost felt as if I was going to cry. His eyes did not hold the happy-to-see-me Jace I had always known. They held a look as if he wanted me to leave. I felt my eyes water over, from anger or from hurt I did not know. I was so pissed that he had talked to me that way, but also hurt that he would look so angry at me. He did not say a word as he turned back to his drink.

"What the hell?" I half yelled, half cried at him. "What did I do?" My hands clenched into fists and my eyes watered more. Then I knew I was 'crying' from anger. "How long have you been back?" I felt as if my jaw bone was going to crack in two, from my grinding them together.

"Oh, so you're talking to me now?" He turned, his face inches from mine.

"What are you talking about?" I asked in a dangerously calm tone.

"You know what I am talking about." He spat as he finished his drink. Then proceeded to slam it on the table, taking one step to press himself against me.

I turned to trudged out the door, "Fine," I yelled without turning back.

"Fine, just walk away from me, again." Oh, so that is what this is about. Guilt slowly consumed my body. It felt as if a huge, thousand pound brick was crushing me. I ran back to him, and reached for his hand. He pulled away. "I'm sorry." Without a word he walked back over to the table to get a drink. I fallowed. Jumping in front of him and began, "Jace, I am so, so, so very sorry. Can we talk about this?" I pleaded with him.

He slowly nodded his head. His eyes did not meet mine as I drug him out of the loud music and to his room.

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There it is! Hope you liked it. :)

Remember VOTE, COMMENT, AND VOTE!

Oh yeah, Did I say vote? Well, Vote! ;)

Chapter 12

The Art of Hope (12)

It's so short, i know, and i am very sorry for that. Things have been nuts around here.

Enjoy and comment, vote!

Chapter 12

Not a word past between us as I dragged him to his room. When I got there, I slammed the door behind us and turned around to face him. For a moment or maybe two we did not say a word. We just gazed into each other's eyes. His were dark and hateful, and though I tried not to, I kind of cringed away from him. I was bewildered by them; never had I seen him so livid. Then, I quickly realized he was drunk.

"Well, spit it out!" He yelled the scent of strong alcohol fanned across my lips. I unconsciously took a step back; he scared me a little.

"Um," his gaze made me forget what I was going to say.

"Missy, I really am not in the mood for you right now. So, I think you say what you have to say, or get the fuck out." I tried to tell myself it was the alcohol talking, but the stab of hurt still shot through my heart. I felt my eyes glaze over, and hoped to God that he could not tell. I looked down as I forced myself to take deep breaths, so that I could clear my mind. That did not help; I felt my heart speed and more water rush to my eyes. I decided that I should hold my breath. "Fuck, Missy. I can't handle you anymore. Just get the fuck out." I looked up at him, shocked once more. One single tear slide down my face as our eyes meet; his still dark and vile. I pleaded with mine.

"Okay?" I finally choked out; I nodded my head, and shakily walk out. As soon as the door closed behind me the water works came. I hated myself for letting it affect me. Hated myself for thinking he was different.

Hated I let him in. Hated that I needed him right now, and he was not here. Most of all, I hated I was crying over that ass.

I ended up in the kitchen. I began cooking some comfort food, fried chicken. The smell of it calmed me just a little. My eyes had dried and my breathing almost back to normal. I had come to the conclusion that I was going to carry on as if he meant nothing. If he wanted to work it out he could come crying to me. This, my friends, is the new Missy - tough, and powerful.

I was almost done cooking when I heard heavy footstep bounding down the steps. I glanced at the clock. Wow, its 6:00 in the morning, already?

I heard him stop just inside the doorway and take in a sharp breath. "You a new maid?" came a deep accented voice full of huskiness. I remembered the short spandex shorts I had on. I really needed to think about what I put on, and stop forgetting that I don't live alone anymore. "Pop me one in!" The voice was so familiar, like I had heard it once before.

"I'm not a maid." I spat at him. I was in a shitty mood and I truly did not care if I came off as rude.

"Gosh, who pissed on your fruit juice?" My eyebrows pulled together. Was that British with just a hint of French in his voice? I tried to think back, I know I have heard it before. I turned to put the pan in the sink. He continued, "Then who are you?"

"Mary Elizabeth, the Kings long lost daughter." I spoke in a somber tone.

"Leave that out. Oh, and I'm Eric by the way; your father lets me live here to help with the Kingdom." Every bone in my body froze. Eric, the Eric that... Oh. My. God. Finally when I gained control over my body I turned to face him. I had forgotten how tall he was until my neck burned from stretching to glance in his astounding grey eyes. I felt a little tingle down south that never did get scratched. Ashamed of my thoughts, I blushed and turned away.

"Um, yeah, sure," I stuttered while placing the pan back on the stove. I began to turn and walk to the dining room to eat my food when he grabbed my

elbow. Easily turning me around with his muscular arm.

"Do I know you? You look suspiciously familiar." His brows pulled together in deep thought. I quickly shook my head. If he remembered that could only cause problems. "Are you sure? I think I have seen you before."

"Um, No, I am pretty sure I have not seen you before." I hated that I was such a bad liar. He could read the truth right on my face, but he let my arm go. I quickly walk out of the room, then feeling relieved when he was out of my sight. I began on my chicken, in peace. Not halfway done with my first piece, he came cockily in- a smile on his face and a bowl of cereal in his hand. "What happened to the chicken?"

"I would rather find out who you are and how I know you." He gave me a wink. "Or," he began with a sparkle in his deep grey eyes "we can always head up to my room."

After choking on my chicken a managed to get a "Fat chance" out.

We spent the rest of the meal in silence, his grey orbs raking over my body and when reaching my face his brows would furrow. How could he still not know who I was? I wanted to leave so badly, but I knew if I gave up things would only get harder.

Finished with my chicken, I headed to the kitchen to clean up my mess. I know I am Princess now, but I still don't find it right for them to clean up after me. I scrubbed the pan and hummed some tune my mind was making up. When finish I turned to wipe of the oven, and there he was, not even two inches from me. I took a step back and was pushed up against the island. He stepped to match mine.

He bent down, and down some more, bringing his mouth to my ear and spoke, "We can do this the easy way or the hard way, Mary Elizabeth. You can tell me how I know you, or" he chuckled. His breath fanning over my ear and neck, I suppressed a shudder as he finished. "I can make you tell me." He pressed every inch of his masculine body against mine. I chewed on my lip holding in a moan, hating how I was a girl

with such big lust, but I was not going to give in that easy.

Sticking to, what I had left of, my guns I spoke the words "I have no clue who you are, but then again I know lots of people so...." I knew I had to add something in there that made him think that we could know one another. What if he remembered? I shrugged out from under him and walk up the stairs to get ready for my day.

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Comment and Vote! Thanks!!!

Chapter 13

The Art of Hope (13)

Chapter 13

Recap:

Sticking to, what I had left of, my guns I spoke the words "I have no clue who you are, but then again I know lots of people so...." I knew I had to add something in there that made him think that we could know one another. What if he remembered? I shrugged out from under him and walk up the stairs to get ready for my day.

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I ran myself a large bubble bath wanting to calm myself, knowing I have a big day ahead. The warm water sent ever muscle into a relaxed state, and I thought I just maybe could sleep. A knock at the door told me my day was about to begin. "I am in the tube. Who is it?" I yelled so that they could hear me.

"Can I come in, Missy? It's Emily." She yelled back.

"Duh, Come on in." She padded in and peeked at me through the open door.

"I just got to pick up for room, then prep you for your first day of Princess training." She yipped happily

"Don't worry about my room. I want to clean it. And what is Princess Training?" I said while getting out of the bath and putting on one of the robes.

"Well, I kind of made the name up, but that's basically what it is. You are getting fitted for your dresses. You have to check on the progress of your room in the family wing. You have you first history of the Kingdom class, and a meeting with your Father and some other people. He did not give you much to do because you're new at this. I wrote all the times

and stuff down for you." She pointed to my table, "It's over there."

"Not much to do. Are you crazy? That sounds like a full day to me. Oh, and when can I call Katie? I have not talked to her at all." I pleaded with her.

"Don't you use that tone with me. You will have to ask your Father at the meeting." She laid some soft golden clothes on my bed. "Here are your clothes for the day. We can't have you running around in spandex when the Prince is back." I had to giggle to myself. She had no clue how close me and the Prince had come to glorious love making.

"What did I miss?" He voice full of curiosity.

"Oh, I have already met him. This morning in the kitchen." I blew it off as if it was nothing.

She shook her head as she walked out. I began to dress in the outfit she laid out. It was very, um, high class, no, it was royal. The simple cut of the soft gold and baby blue cloth, had its own authority in it. It said 'this lady has power' yet it still made me look innocent all at the same time. The dress came down

to my knee. Its swop neck did not show an ounce of my hard to cover cleavage. The colors drought out a glow in my skin I did not even know I had. I piled my hair on my head, put on light makeup, and the flats that had the same shade of baby blue as the dress.

Grabbing the list, I walked from the room. First on the list was to get fitted for my evening gowns. It was in a little room in a hallway where the offices and stuff were. I easily found my way; I had not got lost one time in the place. I amazed even myself with that one. I opened the door to find four women and two males. Two women looked in there forties, but the rest looked to be in their upper twenties.

"Mary Elizabeth," they all bowed I gave them a slight head bob not really knowing what to do "We are measuring and picking out colors today, Ma'am."

They stripped me down to my underwear. I felt strange; I did not know these people and they have seen me almost naked. I glanced at the men; they look at my breast for just a moment and covered their faces with a look of busywork. I felt myself

blush, and hoped to god they flipped the boat, aka they were gay.

The oldest women and one of the younger, I guessed she was being trained from the way they talked to her, worked on picking out colors. One girl and the males measured me from head to toe. I know I blushed as the young lady gasped when measuring my bust line. That's when the older one spoke up. "Yes, she is very blessed. We are going to have to work hard on the designs to cover it up." They did not speak to me the rest of the time.

When that was all over I left for the next thing on my list- checking on my room. When I got there two people both male and clearly gay sat at a lone table pointing at the walls. When they saw me they stood and bowed. "Well, hello doll. We were waiting for you." I heard the other one whisper to him a "She is beautiful. The maids did not lie. We are going to have to fight that horn dog Prince off of her with a bat." I had to giggle, but I felt so flattered. I knew I was going to like these two. "Let's get started. Today we are picking out colors. I was thinking a dark

brown..." I zoned out as a looked at the overly large room. I could not believe the size, it was almost as big as my living room and kitchen put together form back home. "Mary, Mary, Mary?" I looked up at him. "What colors did you have in mind, my dear?"

I knew what I wanted so I spoke up. "I was thinking a dark brown base color with purple, torques, and gold for accents." His looked around the room with a calculating expression before he beamed.

"That is great! It would work with the lighting. Oh, wow that is amazing. What colors for the bathroom and closet?" He smiled again.

"How about I let you two surprise me?" His eyes lit up and I smiled.

"Mary Elizabeth, Girl, you and I are going to get along just fine." He gave me a wink. "By the way, I am Tony and this is my friend Mike." I had the feeling they were more than 'friends'.

"I sure hope so, but right now I have to head to the study to learn our great history. I will see you two around?"

"Save me a dance next time at the servants club? I know you can work it, girl. It's about time we got some soul in the Kingdom." I could not help but smile.

"You bet! I will save one for you too." I spoke to the other one. Then walked I out the door.

I was on my way to my father's meeting. History was horrible. We, me and the elderly lady, went over the past wars. I can't really remember any of it. All I know is that the Kingdom has only been it three and does not see any in the near future.

I stopped in front of the large office door. I could her low whispers from the other side. I tried to hear but could not make anything out. I knock and seconds later the door open. I saw my father's proud face.

"Mary, we were waiting. How has your day been?" He asked leading me to a chair.

"Please call me Missy, and I had an okay day I guess. I still don't believe this is all happening. I looked around the room to see Jace staring at me. I quickly averted my eyes. In they landed on Eric. Great, I

turned bad to the King. "What is the meeting all about?"

"Well, Missy. You still have plans to go to that wedding, this is correct?" I nodded. "Then we have some planning for your well being." I nodded, no need to fight with the King, but I know I don't need anyone to go with me. "We have plans for you to stay in a hotel. With guards in rooms beside you, and a female in the same room. Is this okay?"

"Well, my friends invited me to stay in her new home. If I don't I know she will think something is up. But, I don't think she would see all this coming." I did not tell him how much I wanted to stay with her.

"Would you like to stay with her?" I felt eyes on me. I could not tell if they were Jace's of Eric's.

"Yes Sir, I would, but I understand if it cannot be arranged." I looked to his face. He smiled.

"I think we can work it out." My mind wondered for a second. Why was Eric in here anyway? He is no guard.

Jace's voice spoke up for the first time. "I can stay in the house with her. Annie knows me, and I have been invited. Everything works out great." Yeah right. I thought to myself.

"That could work, Jace. I will work things out with your father on the other stuff." Then the King turned to me. "I have someone I would like you to meet. This is Eric; he is the Prince of my friend I told you about. He is here helping me run the Kingdom."

Eric spoke up, "We had breakfast together this morning." He was very diplomatic; much more so than before. "Mary Elizabeth is very interesting." He took my hand and kissed it. Then, when the King was not looking, winked and darted his tongue across then inside of my palm. I gasp at the touch.

"Let us have lunch shall we?"

The rest of the day was boring. The King had let me call Katie. She was happy to talk to me, and she did not cry. I was thankful for that. I missed her so.

I was going to go dancing, but I was so sleepy form the sleep I skipped out on last night. So, I snuggled in

to my warm bed and waited for sleep to take over. Three light taps came from the door; groaning, rolled myself out of bed.

I opened the door and just guess who it was. Yep, that's right, Jace. I slam the door on his face. Why? Well, One, he is an ass, and two, because I am sleepy. "Missy, Can we talk?" he begged from the other side of the door.

"NO," I yelled in irritation.

"Please! Just give me five minutes." He pleaded once more.

"You can talk for five minutes, but it does not mean I will listen." I said as I got myself comfy in my warm bed. I tried not to think of him as a closed my eyes waiting for sleep once more. I heard my door open and close back quietly. I cursed myself that I forgot to lock it. I felt to end of my bed move on the other side.

"I am sorry. I did not mean it. I was just..." he was silent, "I guess I was angry, and a little drunk." I said nothing. I pleaded with God to let me fall into a deep sleep and forget he was there. Jace waited for me to

speak, but finding I was not going to, he started up again. "It's just that, you walked out on me. Left me there in my room without a word."

I was infuriated. He had said the only words that would provoke me. "Fuck you Jace." I spat as I sat up to look at him.

"What the hell did I say?" Like he did not know.

"How much of the truth have you ever told me? Is it all lies? Because I get the feeling that it is. Are there any other life changing secrets you need to tell me?" I screamed at him.

Still flinching, he spoke low "I had no choice. I wanted to tell you. I did tell you."

"Yeah, after things went too far. Now I am deathly tired and I would like to sleep." With that I rolled over and closed my eyes. Praying for sleep yet again. I felt his body move over top of me. I squeezed my eyes tight; hopping it was all I dream.

With his lips to my ear he whispered "I am sorry. You just drive me crazy." He ran his closed lips along my jaw and back. I shuddered, and luckily did not moan.

There was no way I was going to forgive him. "Missy, Do I have to beg?" He questioned as he continued to run his lips along my jaw. I still said nothing, but this time it was because I knew my voice would come out full of lust. I knew he was forgiven, again. "Ok, then." He grabbed my hand and pulled me to sit on the edge of the bad, feet swinging. He got down on one knee. "Mary Elizabeth, know words can I say. My actions were indisputably incorrect. Every bone pains for forgiveness and you are the only one with the right medicine. Can you ever forgive me for my foolishness?" Then he lightly kissed my hand. My heart speed and saltwater rushed to my eyes. I was a sucker for romance. Not finding the right words I just nodded my head.

Within seconds he had me pinned to the bed. Kissing me with more passion than ever before, his tongue messaged mine. It took a minute for my brain to understand what was going on. I knew I had to stop it before things got out of hand. But, I gripped his hair pulling myself into him anyways. He used one hand to hold him up as he ran the other down my body, slow, and ever so slightly touching me. My

breathing picked up and my back arched a little. He stopped at my knee and hoisted it around his body. A sharp gasp escaped my mouth as I felt his hard prod at the inside of my thigh. 'You have to stop this' I told myself, but my hands held tight to his hair. His kisses moved to my neck causing me to moan. 'STOP THIS NOW' my mind yelled at my hands and legs. With great effort I released my hands and pushed down on his shoulders because I could not get the leverage to push him off. He took it the wrong way and nibbled down the side of my spaghetti straps. "Jace," I whimpered huskily. All he got out was a groan. "Jace, I am not ready?" it came out as a question, because all my body wanted right now was him. He reached for my shirt, but I stopped him with my hands. "I said not right now." His hands went under my shirt and scrubbed the skin under my breast. I was flabbergasted that he did not stop, and my need quickly turned to anger. "Jace, I said stop," my voice strong and authoritative. With an enormous deal of strength, on his part, he pulled away. "Thank you." I said with a shy smile. I knew how hard it was for

him, and I could not find myself mad about it. I just felt flattered.

"You drive me crazy, Missy." He said rolling off of me and still breathing hard. I curled into him.

"I am sorry. I just don't want it to change what we have." Truth was I was afraid. The last time I made love I ended up hurt. I didn't want to give in if I did not know that he was in it for the long run.

"I won't ever do that to you. You do know that, right?" He whispered in my ear. He always did know what I was thinking.

"I know, it just still scares me." He kissed me on the forehead.

That night I drifted into a deep sleep in his arms.

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Here it is! Hope you enjoyed.

Vote and Comment. Plz and thanks!

Chapter 14

The Art of Hope (14)

Chapter 14

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I woke that morning, rolling over to find Jace. He was not there, instead a crippling cramp shot through my lower stomach. I knew what that was, Mother Nature's Little Gift. I pushed the pain to the back of my mind. I swung my legs over the side of the bed ready to start another day. I quickly walked into the bathroom to do my monthly stuff, only to find that I had no Tylenol. As I walked out of the bathroom, taking slow breaths to stop the cramps, I saw a sun dress laid across the chair that was in the corner,

with a letter and an electronic device lying on top. I strolled over to it, and opened the letter. It read

Dear Missy,

Sorry to have left before you woke. I have to go out of town, again. I was going to tell you last night but.... Well, you know. I will be back, hopefully, in three days. You be good, you hear, and have some fun! If you would like to talk find Eric, he has my number.

Thinking of you,

Jace

I smiled and held the letter to my heart. I pick up the electronic device. It was a planner. Cool, I thought to myself. I turned it on and my plains for today popped up.

8:00 - 9:00: Breakfast with Father and Eric

9:00 - 10:20: History of Kingdom

10:00 - 11:30: Free time

11:45 - 12:30: Lunch with Eric (Father in lunch meeting)

12:33 - 1:00: Fitting for clothes

1:00 - 1:50: Make calls

2:00 - ?: Attend a meeting, details at lunch

5:30 - ?: Dinner

Great two meals with Eric, I just want to fake sick and sit out of the whole day just because of that one thing. That would not be hard, with having horrible PMS cramping. Good news, it was not that much to do. Laying down the planner I went to shower and dressed for the day.

I walked down the red carpeted steps, on my way to the dining room. Just thinking how much things had changed. I was living in a dream, but not my dream. I never did wish for this, but the want to be Queen was growing. I knew that I could do it, but did I really want it? I truly did not know the answer. Part of me did and part of me didn't. I stepped into the dining room in my white sundress. The top cut like a sixties sleeveless shirt, but it was shorter than yesterdays. This one came to just above my knee. The King stood.

I still did not feel right calling him my father. Eric sat there as if I had not even entered.

"Missy," I smiled, the King got my name right. "Please sit across from me, so we can talk." The chair he pointed to was next to Eric's. I frowned. Not letting Eric find out was going to be harder than I thought. I took the set anyways.

Eric's head turned to me. He gave a smile just for show. I am guessing for the King, and then he got a look that said he was in deep thought. I knew what over; he was trying to remember me. I turned my head to the King to prevent him from finding out.

"How is your sister?" The King asked.

"She is doing okay. Living. I just feel so guilty for leavening her there." A servant laid a plate with eggs, bacon, and toast on it in front of me.

"Don't feel guilty. You will see her in less than 2 months. We are doing all we can do." I looked up and he smiled at me. I felt something warm rub the side of my thigh overtop my dress. Then give my leg a squeeze. I took in a sharp breath. Then getting a

strange look from the King I played it off as chocking on my egg. I slide my hand under the table and pinched the fire out of Eric's hand. He pulled his hand away fast. What a jerk.

"How is that coming along? I hope it well." I asked with my head down.

"Well, first we have to work it out with the council. They need to know that it will not... change things." Change things? What was there to change she was one girl. "And we have to fight for custody of the child. You would have to do it, seeing as you are the only blood relation."

"That would be fine. I will do anything. And how can she 'change things'?" he looked sad, yet proud at the same time.

"It's nothing. They just think that it is wrong."

At that moment a butler came in the room and bowed. "Sir, the prime minster is here." With that he left.

"It seems my breakfast is cut short. You two have a lovely day." He stood and walked out of the room. I

only hoped that I would, I could learn his walk. It was graceful, yet held so much pride. I was brought out of my thoughts when a felt Eric's hand slide under my dress. Angry now, I stood with such force it knocked the chair over. I turned to look in his eyes.

"Get your fucking hands offa me!" I whisper screamed.

"I told you I would do what it takes to make you tell me how I know you. That was not a lie, Mary." He chuckled and stood to come near me. "You made the choice to do it the hard way."

"That gives you no right to feel me up!" I spat at him.

"But, you feel so... mmm," he ran his hands along my side.

"You have three seconds to get your fucking hands off of me. 1..." He ran his hands to my bum.

"2..." he ran them to the side of my chest. Not being able to let him get to three. I took my knee to his balls. He crumpled to the floor.

"What... what... what happened to 3?" He said in a weak voice as he grabbed himself.

"Do you not understand the words 'get your fucking hands off me' or should I give you the number of the last guy who touched me?"

"Come on Baby, you know you liked it." He joked while still holding his manhood.

"Yeah, just as much as you like your buddies being kicked." I calmly stepped over him to leave, but a strong hand wrapped around my ankle and pulled me down.

"Babe, I will find you out. You can't hide this forever." He whispered in my ear.

"Good luck with that." I pulled myself off of him. Then a cramp hit and my arms gave out and I landed on him, again.

"I knew you wanted me." He ran his hand back down to my ass.

"Get your fucking hand off me!" I yelled yet again, as I pulled myself off, holding my stomach and running up the stairs.

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Eric's POV 10:34

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I had just finished a jog and was walking to the indoor shower system in the pool room to wash of before a swim. I was thinking about Mary, again. I know, I know her from somewhere, but for the life of me I could not remember.

I walked into the pool room and looked around. No one was around, and for that, I was glad. I liked to swim in peace. I left my towel and clothes on a chair and went to the shower room. After I had washed of; I padded to the pool again. This time I was not alone.

There she was, Mary. In a one piece that turned me hot just to look at. I inwardly groaned; it was one of the one pieces that had a cut right down the middle. I could see the swells of her breasts, and her toned stomach. She stretched her arms up ready to do a

graceful dive. She was sexiest woman on the face of the planet. Her body was heaven. I wanted to fuck her so hard over and fucking over. I wanted to press my lips to every fucking inch of her body. I wanted to do her in the shower, the pool, her bed, my bed, ever fucking bed in this place. I wanted to hear her moan through her perfect pink lips, to have her fingernails dig into my skin while begging me for more.

At that moment I promised myself I would have her. It was my quest to have her, and with her wanting me, too. "I will have you, Mary Elizabeth." I said it soft and quiet, so that she could not hear me.

I did not realize she had dove until I saw her come up out of the water. Water only made he that much more appetizing, she was a goddess. She went back under to swim another lap. That's when I took my chance and lunged into the water.

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Missy's POV

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I was taking a quiet swim. Felling the most at easy I had in the time I had been here. I knew it was because of two things. One, I had gotten on birth control, so less periods, thank God. And At the moment was now on some cramp relievers. Two, I had given Eric a nice present to the balls. I grinned to myself. I had reached the other wall and pulled myself up. I stood and smoothed my hair back, and took in a much needed breath of air. I turned and lean against the wall with my eyes still closed. I felt the water ripple against my skin, so I opened my eyes. And there he was, the Devil himself. I shrugged in disgust, as he eye fucked me. I placed the heel of my hands on the concrete wall behind me, to pull myself out of the water. He stopped me with his hands. He fucking put his hands on me, again. Does this boy ever lean? He pulled me back into the water. I took that as a no.

"Are you going to tell me?" Like I would tell him.

"Why don't you go fuck with one of your sluts, Eric." I pushed past him.

"Aw, babe, don't be like that. I only wanted a little kiss. You seem to give Jace whatever he wants." I froze, how the hell did he know? We tried to keep it from everyone. "Ha, you thought I didn't know. I just want to say. Watch out. He is not as he seems, and if the King found out. Jace could... Well, let's not go there." I turned; he had a huge ass smirk on. And if I did not totally hate him, I probably would have melted from the look of him. The water slipping down his finely tone chest and abs. His eyes burning in amusement.

"What... What did you say?" Jace is not as he seems? I knew what would happen if the King found out, but I wanted to know about Jace.

"What part?" His smile grew as he took a step closer.

"Jace 'is not as he seems'?" I spoke in a quiet tone, afraid.

"Oh, that. Well, Mary Elizabeth, Jace is as much a player as I am. He just goes about getting what he wants in a different way." He winked at me. I refused to believe him. Jace would not do that. Jace is my

friend. I have known him so long. He wouldn't, would he?

"You lie." I spat at him. Then turned and left.

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So, What do you think about Eric????? Ha ha he's an ass. I know! You should hear him in my head! ha ha

Hope you liked it.

Don't forget

vote

Comment

Plz and thanks!

Chapter 15

The Art of Hope (15)

Chapter 15

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I woke in the yearly morning. It was the day Jace was to be back. I smiled as I felt warm fingertips running up and down my side. He had come back, and I was asleep. I was a little sad he did not wake me, but he was here now.

"How was your trip, honey?" He did not respond. That was okay with me. I just closed me eyes back, enjoying the feel of his fingertips that were now running up and down on my bare skin. I rolled over and snuggled to him, but he felt too big. My feet did

not touch his as they always do. The hands on my dare waist were way too large. The muscles that engulfed me were not Jace's. Even the smell was not him. Slowly I opened my eyes, afraid. As fast as I could shove the blankets of and get my feet to the floor, I did. That's right, it was Eric. In my bed. I let him touch me, and I snuggled to him. I liked how it felt, yet it disgusted me at the same time.

"What's the rush, babe? We have been closer than this." He said in his dreamy accented voice. Oh, how I could get lost in it, but I have to focus. He's a jerk. He's a jerk. He's a jerk. I had to keep telling myself.

"Get the fuck out of my bed, and then get the fuck out of my room." I yelled pointing at the door.

"Come on sweet stuff. I have been in your bed before." I froze. Did he... remember? I guess he could read my face because he said "That's right, babe. I remember!" He winked. All the blood ran to my face. Shit. "So why don't you get your sexy ass over here, so that we can finish what we started?"

I could not say a word. The breath was caught in my lungs, air clinging to the inside of them for dear life.

My eyes glazed over and the memories came flooding back. The feel of his touch, his lips on mine, his lips on my body, and I turned hot. I shook my head. I could not be attracted to him. Not with Jace and I working out so well. I lusted over Eric, but Jace could be... more.

Gritting my teeth I spoke "What happened between us was... Nothing. It was a one nightstand that had no sex, Me and you will never be that close, EVER. So, get out of my room now." Did I see a little hurt cross over his eyes? It was so cute, the face he had. He looked like a little child who had found out that Santa is not real. I, being the stupid person I am, felt a little bad and added, "Look, Me and Jace are kind of a thing. I really like him, and I don't want to change what we have. I know I left you hanging that night, and I am kind of sorry. It's just that after, I felt kind of slutty and seeing you brings that back. Now, will you please get out of my room?"

His grin now lay upside down on his face. "Missy, You don't know what the hell your getting into. Jace is no different than me. He will leave you high and dry. If

you don't ever trust me on any other thing, trust me on this." His eyes looked so truthful, but I could not make myself believe.

"Jace would not do that to me. I have known him too long. He is not just my partner, but a lifelong friend." I felt as if I was trying to tell myself this. I don't know why I was even considering something coming from mister jerk-face.

"Whatever, don't say I did not warn you." He walked to the door then turned, "And Missy," It was the first time he had said my name in the whole time I was here, and I hated what it did to me. My mind flickering to the steamy night we had. "I will not give up. You will cave into me." With that he closed the door.

I was shocked. Did he really just vow to do me? Gross, I was glad I did not have sex with him. But a little, very small, part of me wanted him to come back, throw me against the wall and have me. I tried to shake the thought away. I did not know how long I had stood there, thinking these words over and over, but a knock came from the door. I went to open it. I

knew it was not Eric, he would not have knocked. I smiled, happily seeing it was Jace. I pulled him into the room and kissed him. As always our kisses started soft and loving, but then turned forceful and needing. I had to stop him again as he went for my shirt. I could not help it; the words Eric said ran to my head. "Um, can I ask you something?"

"Anything, honey." He said kissing my neck.

"Jace, Please this is important." He sat up and looked at me questioningly.

"Look, Jace. Eric said something and I just want to ask." I looked at him shyly - feeling stupid I was even asking.

"What did that douche say?" He said it as if he did not care what Eric said, like they were friends.

"Well, he told me to 'watch out' that you are not as you seems. I... I was just... wondering if... I should worry? I don't want to be played. And I don't think you would, but I am scared here, Jace." He cupped my face in his hands and looked into my eyes. Before I knew it he was kissing me, his tongue taking control

over mine with ease. His hands pulled me closer, and I knew where this was going, again. I pushed him away. His trying to get in my pants was not proving Eric wrong.

"How could you think that, Missy?" He pulled my face inches from his. "If I wanted to get in your pants so badly, I would have." There was a tone In his voice I did not know, but a felt refreshed. He kissed me on the forehead then said "I got to get goinig. Leave the door unlocked for me tonight?" He smiled.

"Of course, I always do," not bothering to tell him about Eric, things would totally blow up. He gave me a light kiss on the lips and was off.

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I think this is the first time i have uploaded to days in a row. Next chapter will be the some conversation but in Eric's POV. I have not started on it yet so it may take some time.

Like always, Vote and Comment, Plz and thanks

Oh, and a big thank you to my new fans!!!!

Chapter 16

The Art of Hope (16)

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Chapter 16

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Eric's POV

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I was on my bed staring at the wall oblivious to everything around me. I could not sleep. A problem I have always had. I don't like taking night time sleep aids, they tended to make me sleep walk, but let's not go there. I was thinking of things I would rather be doing; I wanted to go back to the states. I liked how it

was there; no one was afraid to be sexual, and we all know I like sexual. It was nothing like here or even like my home nation, Luxembourg. My mind drifted to the week I went to stay with Jace. The King had sent him there for two years over something, I did not know what. The night that really stuck out was the night of the mystery girl. She said her name, but I was so wrapped up in her body I totally forgot it. I remembered how her short small body convulsed under mine as I kissed her in places most people would be ashamed to talk about. I remembered her dark blond hair. Her deep green- It hit me, I knew right then who Mary Elizabeth was. She was my one night stand. Well, my kinda one night stand. Oh. My. Fucking. God. I almost fucked the daughter of the man I want to run the country for. As much as that shocked me I was still going to try to get in her pants. God, she's so stubborn, it was going to be hard. Thinking of her, I decided I would go 'check up' on her.

I slowly opened her door and let myself in. She was deep in sleep. A shot of jealousy rocked throughout my body; I wished I could sleep like that. Her body

took up almost the king sized bed. Her head was on her pillow, her legs flown every way, one arm under her head and the other sprawled backward. The scene before me caused me to laugh a little. Although she was in disarray, she was still sexy as hell. I knew it was her, the girl from that night. The girl I dreamed of fucking (when I could sleep that is). I don't know why I did it but I walked to the side of her bed and cuddled up against her. She let me curl into her - spooning. I thought she was going to wake, but she let out a low groan as she stretched and shimmied into me more. Again, without my brain telling me to I wrapped my arm around her.

I was so peaceful I slept for about four hours straight. For normal people it's nothing, but for me it's like a full nights rest. It was not yet light out, and I was running my fingers lightly over her hip. I knew she had woken, I could feel a deference in her body. She took in a deep breath and asked "How was your trip, honey?" I froze, crap, she thinks I am Jace. What the hell was I still doing here? Well, it's too late now; I just need to act like I am trying to get in her pants or something. It won't be hard; I am not afraid to do it in

the morning. I lifted her shirt a little and ran my finger along her bare skin. She then did something I did not expect. She curled into me, her head now on my leaning against my chest. Liking the feel, I laid my hand on her hip again. All of the sudden she stiffened. Then she jumped out of the bed as fast as she could.

"What's the rush, babe? We have been closer than this." It's true we had been, and oh how I wanted her to cave right now and let us get closer than ever before, but the look of disgust on her face told me otherwise.

"Get the fuck out of my bed, and then get the fuck out of my room." She yelled at the top of the lungs. Wow, was this girl pissed. I would have flinched, but the sight of her when she was angry was too sexy.

"Come on sweet stuff. I have been in your bed before." She froze. I knew she was keeping this secret from me. I also knew what she was thinking, so I answered her unspoken question "That's right, babe. I remember!" I gave her a wink. She blushed. I thought I would give it another try to see if she

would give into my amazingly good looks, "So why don't you get your sexy ass over here, so that we can finish what we started?"

She stood there, a battle in her head. I hoped it was over wanting me. I hoped that she would pick me. She was just too fucking mouth watering to pass up.

After about half a minute she spoke up. "What happened between us was... Nothing. It was a one nightstand that had no sex. Me and you will never be that close, EVER. So, get out of my room now." Ouch, that hurt a little. I know I was a jerk, but that was downright rude. I don't know why it affected me so. She was just another girl. She looked at me as if she was feeling guilty for what she had just said and finished it with, "Look, Me and Jace are kind of a thing. I really like him, and I don't want to change what we have. I know I left you hanging that night, and I am kind of sorry. It's just that after, I felt kind of slutty and seeing you brings that back. Now, will you please get out of my room?" Slutty, Okay so she does not sleep around, that's fine. She can only sleep with me. Wow, what a great fucking plan. Then I frowned.

That won't work, Jace has her fucking wrapped around his finger.

I need to tell her how Jace really is, but I knew she would not believe me. Well, here goes nothing, "Missy, You don't know what the hell you're getting into. Jace is no different than me. He will leave you high and dry. If you don't ever trust me on any other thing, trust me on this." Jace truly is just as bad as me, but there was some way different he went about it. All the girls he fucked/fucks end up hurt. I, being the gentleman I am, make sure they know it is a onetime thing. Sometimes two, but only if they were worth it. More than two and we have a problem.

She was debating with herself again. "Jace would not do that to me. I have known him too long. He is not just my partner, but a lifelong friend." As much as she meant to tell me this, I knew she was talking to herself. She did not want to believe Jace would do such a thing.

I shrugged my shoulders, "Whatever, don't say I did not warn you." I walked to the door then turned to her, "And Missy," It was the first time sense that night

I had said her name. It brought back the memories. Oh, the glorious memories of my lips on every inch of her body. I glanced into her eyes and they were distant. I found myself hoping, again, that she was thinking the same thing I was. I spoke in a strong determined tone, "I will not give up. You will cave into me." With that I walk out of the door and closed it to. I could not get the smile off of my face, her reaction was priceless. She was caught between lust, shock, and hate. I smile to myself thinking 'The fun begins!'

I padded my way back to my room. I had gotten more sleep last night than I had in weeks. It haunted me that it happen when I was with Missy. Whatever caused that? I must have been so tired. I began to think of my plans to go home. I was leaving right after Christmas to see mother, father, and the beloved family of mine. Really and truly I did not like any of them except my mother. My father only cared for my older brother, the heir to the throne. I felt the blood boil under my skin. I wanted to rule, and all my older brother did was fuck around. Not in the same way I do, but goof off and not care. My mother seeing this

sent me here. Knowing the King so well and knowing he had no heir. The thing is, now he does. The only way that I could become king is to marry Missy. Shit, what am I thinking? She is in love with Jace, and I am thinking that he feels the same way. Let's just say I'm fucked. And sure, she would be a hell of a fuck, but a good wife, I think not.

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OK, so thanks for the ideas of names and stuff. That question will not be answered for awhile tho.

And remember

VOTE and COMMENT

PLEASE and THANKS

Hugs and kisses

-newhope

Chapter 17

The Art of Hope (17)

Hey Guys, I know i said i was going to upload last night but i got snowed in... well, iced in (freezing rain). So, sorry and because of that i had not the time to do i really good edit. Well Anyways, read, vote, comment and Enjoy!

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Chapter 17

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My days were getting busier. Today was the last day before we left for the wedding, and I was finishing up last minute things. Annie had sent my dress to the

castle, and I was now going to my finial fitting for it. After that I was to shave and fix my eye brows (Why does this place not have a spa?), and after that, dinner. I also had to pack. Then the King wanted to speak to me in his room before I slept.

Eric pasted me in the hall. "Hey Babe, you ready to party it up? A wedding. Sounds fun. I wish I was going and like Jace, sharing a bed with you." He winked, and slapped my ass. Some things never change.

"Sh, Eric, no one can know, you asshole. So, shut your mouth and stop touching me." I spat at him in a low whisper. He strode over and pushed me up against the wall. Here we go again. Should I go for the balls or should I break his nose?

He bent his face to mine. "Come on Babe, you know you want me." He whispered in my ear.

I felt the need to toy with him. Obviously, kicking him in the balls was not working. "Oh, Babe," I pulled my hand up to his face, "How did you ever know?" I ran my fingertips along his jaw line trailing it down and between his pecks and to his ads. They, I must say,

are incredible. So firm and hard and, and mouthwatering. He pushed himself into me; I felt his manhood get happy just from my touch. I wanted to moan with pleasure, but I kicked the thought out of my head and continued, "Truth is," I added in a bored tone "you're just not good enough." I shrugged out from under him and walked away, snickering to myself while also trying to shake away my foolish lust.

I came to the fitting room and opened the door to find everyone ready for me. They had the burgundy dress in their hands. It was something Annie picked out for me. I was to wear it in her wedding. She got it, but it was a size to big. Well, it had to be for my breasts to fit. So, I was having it tailored; as far as she will know, it fit perfectly.

I was finally done packing and ready to go to sleep. Jace was on my bed smiling at me as I pranced around in my shorts and spaghetti straps. I was so ready to go. So, ready to see Annie and my sister that it almost hurt. I skipped to the bathroom to get my silk robe.

"I will be back soon, honey. The King wants to speak with me." I leaned in and gave him a kiss on the lips. I meant for it to be quick and loving, but he pulled me down and wrapped his arms around me. He kissed lightly on my neck, and trickled his fingertips on my hips causing me to giggle. "Honey, I have to go. I will be back in just a sec, promise." He let me go, but looked at me longingly.

"You better; I don't think I can take it." He whined. I rolled my eyes and walked out of the room. Just for show I swayed my hips at him. I knew he saw because I heard his groan.

The hall was silent. The carpet warm under my feet. I was beginning to love this place. Yes, love it. It was so homey for a big ass castle. The maids had started hanging up Christmas decor. By the time I get back from the wedding it will be like the North Pole. I smiled, I love Christmas, it's so joyful and it's a time to put things to rest for awhile. Before I knew it, I was at my father's door. That's right; I said father. He was growing on me; it was the way he looked at me -

such pride and love. I could not hide the need I had for him.

I tapped on the door.

He opened it with a grin on his face and joy sparkling in his eyes. It warmed my heart to see that look. "Glad you came. I want to talk to you." Another thing I like about him is that he gets right down to the point.

"Hey, what did you need?" I asked as he led me to a sitting area next to a fire.

"Well, it's touchy, but I think you can handle it." I was worried now but said nothing. He continued, "It's about you, and I also want to explain why I was not there for you. Fully, this time and in all truth." I just nodded my head.

"First, I will need to know what your plans are. Would you take over as Queen or do you want to reside here as just a... person?" Oh no, not this question. I knew the answer, but did I want to tell him? I wanted to, but if I say yes it is set in stone. Then I will have no way out if Katie cannot come.

Plus, I am still scared as shit to run a country. Even a small one.

"I want to... I want to," The words would not come, "I think... I want... to become... Queen." Finally, "But I don't know if I can do it, and what about Katie?" That truly was what was holding me back.

"Are you joking?" He asked in shock. "The servants and maids all love you. You and Eric seem to be getting along fine. Jace would jump in front of a bullet for you, and that's without it being his job. Don't you see? You are meant for this." He came over and pulled me into a huge. "As for Katie, I can tell you love her, and because of that I will do everything, and I mean everything, to do what is best for her." He kept on hugging me. I felt so loved. It was the first time I had been hugged by one of my parents, and they truly meant it. I felt a tear of joy run down my face. This kind of happiness is all I ever wanted; I did not care about the power and the money. This, right now, was what I wanted. To be loved like a daughter should be.

"I love you, Dad." It came out before I even knew what I was saying. He froze. From shock or for some other reason, I had no clue. I mean shit, I shocked myself. All my life hating him and here I am.

My dad - it felt so right to say it - pulled back and looked into my eyes. He was crying, too. He eyes so warm and loving. That's when he spoke, "I love you, too. I am so sorry I was not there for you. I wish I could have been. I wish I would have known about you sooner. I wish I could have watched you grow into the beautiful woman before me."

The love kept coming; I felt as if my heart was growing. One line he said stood out, "What do you mean by 'I wish I would have known about you'?"

He looked down and smiled. I felt a story coming on.

"It was about 22 years ago, when I first laid eyes on your mother. She was the most beautiful woman I had ever seen. I, having such a big ego, went right up to her and told her she was going to accompany me to dinner. She said 'In your dreams, hot stuff.'" I could not help but think of Eric. Maybe he acts this way because my father does. This made me soften to Eric

a little, but just a very, very little. "Well, after asking her about five times. She said yes. I was there for some business, for about 4 months. We feel in love. Well, I did. I told her this; she never did say it back. I did not push her to say it. I just needed her to know that I loved her. We made love so many times, and even to this day I have had nothing better." It was strange talking to him about sex, but he never was a father to me, so it was not all that bad. "I had to leave, and I begged her to come with me. To marry me because I wanted to spend the rest of my life with her, but she refused. After your mother, I did not marry, and I did not want to. I still don't." He looked into my eyes with pain. I took one of his hand is mine for comfort.

"I was wondering about her a lot the past three years, so I sent some of my agents to find her. That's when I found you. I had Jace get close to you; I had to get your DNA. Everything told me you where my child and you are." He looked me, his eyes so proud, loving, caring, and so much more. "I did everything to keep you safe, but I wanted to know you. I wanted to love you, and I wanted you to have what was

rightfully yours - this kingdom." I hugged him again with tears of joy in my eyes. I loved him; I don't know how, but I did.

He kissed me on the forehead, "You should get some sleep. You have a big day coming and thank you for everything. I love you, Missy. I love you so much." I stood to leave.

"I love you, too, Dad."

I walked down the hall with a large smile on my face. My heart pumped loving blood throughout my body. I felt warm, like nothing could bring me down. Smiling I opened my bedroom door, Jace was still there lying on my bed - shirtless. He was staring me down with a smirk on his face.

"You look so beautiful when you smile. I take it the King told you everything." I shook my head from side to side. "Then what was that all about?" He was confused.

"My dad told me everything." He beamed at me, and motioned for me to come to him. I bounded into his arms. He held me to him and I cuddled into his chest.

I felt my heart grow more. I think I may love Jace. He has been my friend for so long and now here we are.

"I am so happy for you. I have never seen you so... I don't think there is a right word for it." He kissed my forehead, but that was not what I wanted. I lifted my head up and kiss him softly on the lips. He kissed back softly, but I ran my tongue across his bottom lip, wanting more. He opened up, but before I could enter he was in my mouth. He was so forceful, so demanding. My body went on high alert because I knew what he was trying. I let it go a little longer. I did not want to stop, but I was not ready to make love to him even if I love him. He ran his hand down to my bum and pulled me on top of him. I was straddling him now and I felt his hard hit my spot. I shuddered at the feeling. My body took over and I ran my hands down his bare chest. He groaned and pulled my rode off. My head was screaming at my lustful body. Nothing happen, it kept going. I shook my head to gain control and surprisingly it worked. I rolled myself off of him, but he rolled on top of me.

I spoke up, "Jace, I can't." I whispered. "I want to but I can't"

"Why do you wait so long to stop me? It so painful to have to stop when I get going." I gave him a sympathetic smile.

"Because I want to just as bad." He perked up to that.

"Then come on, honey." I shook my head and he looked gloomy, again.

"It's not that I don't want too. Please know that sometimes it's all I can do to stop. I am just not ready" The truth was what Eric said still haunted me, and Jace was proving him right by pushing me into sex. Me loving him was not enough. I had to know that he felt the same. I pulled the covers over me and placed my head on the pillow hoping I could sleep. After a minute or two Jace wrapped his arm around me.

Chapter 18

The Art of Hope (18)

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Chapter 18

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The plane ride was crazy long. I was all fidgety. I hated having all that time to think to myself. I spent it thinking about Katie, I hoped that mother was doing right by her. It was slowly eating me up inside - that I had left Katie to take care of herself. I promised myself that if things were too bad for her I would bring her home with me to the castle, in two days from now.

I also thought about Annie. Ecstatic, was the best word to say - I was ecstatic for her. But I could not help but let the little green giant creep in. I was jealous, but only a little. I had dreamed so many times of finding that kind of love. But I loved Annie too much for this spark of jealousy to mess anything up. I was planning to take Annie clubbing tonight. I was going to pay the two hottest guys to give her a lap dance. I smiled to myself. She would love it. She loved Jason so much, but Annie always did love to Party, too. And if Jason hates me for it, he won't after he sees their wedding present. I smiled to myself.

But the majority of the time I was thinking about the man sitting next to me - Jace. The words floating in my mind - I Love you - were taunting me, playing with me, and driving me to the limit. The question was, did I really love him or was it my lust wanting me to love him or was it I loved the thought of loving him. I really did not know. I was hoping it was love. I was sick of being afraid that it wasn't.

We were now pulling into Annie's drive. Not being able to wait any longer, I jumped from the slowly

moving car and ran to the door that was just now opening. I could hear Jace chuckle from the car behind me as I tackled Annie. We stood there, hugging one another for the longest time. I felt a tear slide down my cheek. "I missed you so." I whispered to her.

"I missed you, too. You have no clue how much." She spoke as her grip tightened. We pulled apart and I saw tears in her eyes, too. By this time Jace was right behind me with our bags. Annie looked at me and him with a look as to say 'will talk later'. I just rolled my eye as I dabbed at my tears.

"So, you ready for the big day?" I said as we sat in the chairs in the kitchen.

"Let's go for a walk?" She asked ignoring my question all together. I just nodded my head, knowing what she wanted to talk about - Jace.

We grabbed our coats ready to go out into the frigged weather. "Missy, remember we are going to your mother's in twenty minutes."

"Yeah, we won't take long." I turned to trail Annie out the door, but Jace pulled me into him and planted a soft kiss on my lips. I felt warmth spread though my body. The same warmth I felt when I talked to dad the other day. I kissed him back and turned to fallow Annie.

She walked past her died flower garden and into the woods. I knew she was making distance between us and the boys. We walked in silence for a minute or two. I took in the hibernating trees. The sky was dark and gloomy. I drew a deep breath of the cool winter air; it calmed me to be home, to know just about every face, to not have to worry about my image, to know that if I was to breakdown Annie was just a step away. I suddenly felt all the stress, which I had no clue I had, wash away from my muscles. It was like everything was clear.

"So, how is everything? Have you found a new job? Did you get a new roomy? Where did you even move, again?" She asked with excitement. I shoot my head at her; a smirk playing on my lips.

"You know, I am here for you. I think I should get to ask all the questions." I chuckle afterwards hoping I had changed to subject.

"Yeah well, you the one that is gone, not me. And I can tell just from your voice that you are not going to tell me everything. At least answer me this, How are you and Jace doing?" I looked at her sly face. I could not help but love her.

"One, I am living in Cali." Lie. "Two, everything is good." Well, right now it is. "Three, No, I have no new roomy, and no, I have no new job." I smiled at her.

"Thanks for answering the ones I don't care to have the answers for." She frowned. I did not answer, I mean how can I tell her about Jace when I am not sure of that myself? She continued in a whisper, "I saw how you looked at him, Missy. You can't hide the truth from me." I glanced at her shyly and turned away. How could she know and I not? She stopped walking and turned to me. I stopped to with my head down. "Why are you scared? He has always there for you and I truly don't think he would hurt you, Missy. I truly don't."

Because of two things. I thought to myself. One, I don't know if I can ever truly trust someone, and two, what Eric told me scared the shit out of me. But what I told her was, "I don't know if he feels the same." It was not a lie, but not the whole truth either.

"I guess I can understand that..." She paused and I looked into her eyes and she had that sly look again. "You still have not done it with him yet, have you?" I inspected a leaf beside my shoe as a shook my head. She just chuckled. "I guess I can understand that, too." I was wanting to change the subject badly. Then remembered my present to her and Jason.

"Um... We need to be getting back. I have to leave in a few. Plus, I want you and Jason to open your present tonight before the wedding." I gave her a sly smile of my own.

"Oh Yeah, that reminds me. I have a present for you and Jace, too!" She yipped.

"Why? I am not getting married." I asked as we turned back to the house.

"An early Christmas present!" She yipped again. I just rolled my eyes.

We were sat in her living room and it was time for her to open her present. I gave yet another sly smile; I knew that she AND JASON would love it. I could not hold in a snicker. She looked up and asked. "What is so funny?" I just shook my head and motioned for her to open it.

I saw her face turn red, and Jason's eyes turn dark with lust as they saw the thin, black, lacy, lingerie. I began to laugh uncontrollably. I remember when we promised one another that on the others wedding we would buy then lingerie. I grabbed at my stomach to calm myself. I heard another set of laughter and open my eyes to see it was Annie and Jason. Although they were laughing, it was more like giggles compared to mine.

"Oh Missy, you. Are. Going. To love. Yours." She breathed in between laughter. My hysterics turned into soft chuckles as I gave her a questioning look. "Just look in the bag, Missy." He giggled again after pointing the bag that sat in front of me and Jace. I

looked at her skeptically - all sings of laughter gone, but hers continued.

"And thank you. Our gift will be put to good use." Jason added, while pulling Annie closer to whisper in her ear.

Slowing and with a little shake of my hand I pulled the bag into my lap. I had a feeling I knew what was in here, and I did NOT want Jace to see. I reached my hand in - afraid. I felt my fingers rest against a lacy material. Before Jace could see, I pulled my hand out and hurriedly placed it on the floor. Annie's laughter became all that I could hear as I glared at her.

She shrugged and calmed herself then said, "Jace, there is a card in there for you. If you would like to read it..." Jace's hand stretched over me, and I began to panic.

I snatched the bag, "I will get it." I was completely panicking. I reached around the bundle of lace and found the card. I handed it to him as he gave me a look that said what-the-hell-got-into-you? I just smile and nodded my head for him to open it.

"Read it out loud!" Annie chipped as she gave me a knowing smile and a wink.

Jace opened it looking around hesitantly and he began, "Jace, I know that Missy is giving you a hard time right now." She giggled because I gave her an evil look. She was really beginning to take this too far. "But, it won't be long now." He looks at me with a look of being uncomfortable. That makes two of us. He began again, "In the bag is a little something to make you first time with her memorable. You may not see it for a while, but..." He chocked the next part out in embarrassment. "It is sure to make you hard." Annie busted out laughing and so did Jason. I always knew she was very open but this was too much.

I stood and looked at the clock. "It's time for us to go, Jace. I don't want to keep Katie waiting." I spoke through gritted teeth. "Annie, be ready to go by 7:00. You lucky I am still taking you out." I strode out of the house hearing Annie's laughter trailing me.

Jace grabbed my hand. "Honey, don't be mad. She is doing what she thinks is right. I-" he took a deep

breath, "I- can. Wait. If I have to." He looked down like it was killing him to say that.

I could not believe he wanted it this bad. I lifted his head with my two hands. I said not a word as I brought my lips to his. "I am sorry." I whispered our lips barley touching. Our lips meet and it was soft and caring. It was an I'm-sorry kiss. But I knew that a sorry like this would not get fixed until we did it.

He pulled me into a hug. "I know you are. Now, let's go. I am ready to see Katie as much as you are."

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We pulled up into my mother's drive. To say I was nervous is an understatement. I was shaking. I was afraid to see Katie. Afraid of what my mother could have done to her. I did not realize I was still sitting in the car until Jace opened my door.

"You okay?" I nodded. "I am right here. It is going to be fine." I glanced into his sky blue eyes, and I knew it would be as long as he was with me. "Let's go." He pulled me out of the truck; not letting my hand go as

we walked to my mother's front door. He laid three light knocks upon the door.

It was my mother that answered and I immediately went stiff. Jace gave my hand a light squeeze. "Missy?" I was astonished her voice was clear; not a sign of roughness from drugs or alcohol. I bore deep into her eyes and could still not see a sign of being intoxicated.

"Mom?" I questioned. This could not be her. Never in my life have I seen her clean and sober. I heard heavy footsteps behind her but could not pull my eyes away from hers. Her eyes, for once, looked just like mine-green and bright. The cloudy faraway look all but vanished, leaving me questioning my memories. Was I dreaming right now? A deep grunt like sound came from behind her. I still could not pull my eyes away, but I knew it must be a man. A part of me wondered who he was and what he was doing here, but all I could think was 'Is my mom clean, for real?' I tried to push the hope away. Tried to tell it to stop. I tried to fool my eyes into thinking I was seeing things. But I could not.

"Is this her?" The grunting voice came. It reminded me of a mountain man - deep and demanding. Still I did not look away. My mother's head nodded, but she still said nothing.

"She is beautiful as you said. And is this the man you told me about? The one that she left with?" The grunting man's voice came again. I could not help but flash anger. I was having a moment, for the first time with my mother, and this guy was fucking it all up. My mother nodded again.

I tore my eyes away to look at the man in frustration. I would have laughed but I was much to irritated to. The man was far from the rugged mountain man in my head. He was shorter than me, clean cut, preppy, and looked like a business man.

"Could you please give me a moment with my mother? I have to speak with her." I turned to Jace. His face was as bewildered as my own. I whispered "Alone."

He nodded, "I'll go see Katie." I gave him a shy smile and a peck on the lips.

The short man spoke up again, "I will go to the living room." He began to turn when my mother's hand reached out and she yelled franticly, "NO!" He turned back a sweet smile on his lips.

"I- I just can't do it without you." She chocked out.

"Mother, what is going on?" I looked skeptically at the two of them. I silent tear ran down my mother's face. Instantly my mind flashed to Katie. I grounded my teeth, "Is Katie alright mother? For your sake I sure hope she is okay."

"She is fine. Just fine." She said weakly.

"Then what is this about?" My eyes flickering back to the short man.

He spoke, "Let's sit and we will tell you everything." Something about the man screamed trust, and so I nodded my head.

My mother had poured me tea. Something I was still fuming over. She would offer you a beer, if you were lucky, but never tea. I studied her again as she sat at the table with her head down.

"Mother, tell me what is going on. NOW!"

Mother said nothing and the man spoke up his rough voice echoing through the room. "I am Doctor Anstein. I work at the 'Back-On-Track Clinic' down town. Your mother is in the rehabilitation program." I gawked at him. My mother... rehabilitation... no... yes... what... wait... who? I raised my head to her. He gave me a small smile.

"I'm sorry." She was crying again. "I never knew how much I hurt you. How much I loved you. I only cared about myself. I was a horrid mother to you. I was so broken. You helped me by leaving. I understand if you never want to see me again. I'm so, so, so, sorry." Her words coming so fast I could hardly wrap my mind around it. Before I knew it, her arms where around me, her bawling into my shirt. Instinctively my arms wrapped around her as she cried out the words "so, so, so sorry" over and over. It tugged and pulled at my heart. I was going to cry. Why? Because every dream I had about my mother was coming true in front of my very eyes. "I love you so much, My

Missy." Those words tipped me over and I began to cry.

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So, What did you think? Did you like? I hope so.

Again sorry for the wait. I have been doing Christmas stuff. And wrapping up school.

As always. VOTE. COMMENT. TELL A FRIEND. And PLZ and THANKS in advance.

Oh. And Merry Christmas/Happy Holidays to you if I don't talk to you alls again!

Chapter 19

The Art of Hope (19)

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Chapter 19

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I was still crying. This was I good cry though, a happy cry, a full of love kind off cry. I felt the warmth spread throughout my body with every pump of blood my heart gave. Despite the cool climate I was so warm. Jace was rubbing circles on my hand as he sped down the gravel road to Annie's house. I blotted at my eyes, again. My mouth hurt form the enormous grin on my face, but I could care the least.

Only one thought plagued my mine - would I still fight for my sister to live with me? I knew I could not take her from my mother. One, I was afraid that if my mother did not have Katie she would not have a reason to stay clean. Two, I did not want to deprive Katie of a mother. And now that I knew my mother could be a mother I just could not take Katie away. So I guess I could say I was going to stop my fight for Katie. I felt the corners of my mouth turn down, and sorrow wash through me. I wanted to be selfish and keep her to myself, but I knew that she would be fine now and I should do what is best for her. But, Why in the hell does the "right thing" hurt so much?

I glanced over at Jace. He had a strange frown on his face. He was thinking to himself, I guessed. I gave his hand a small squeeze, "Honey, what's on your mind?"

He glanced at me from the corner of his eye, not turning his head giving an uneasy smile with it. "Nothing sweets, Just thinking about stuff. Did you need something?" His sky blue eyes held I pained expression.

"No, just wanted to know what you were thinking." I would let it go for now. I would talk about it when we were alone in Annie's house, just me and Jace. Annie had asked us to stay over the night of the wedding. She wanted us to bring all her gifts home and get everything set for their return from the honeymoon. I knew what her real reason was - to give me and Jace some alone time.

I glanced over at Jace again. His eyebrows no longer brought together, but I knew he was still in beep thought.

The rest of the car ride was silent as I stole fleeting looks at Jace every minute or so. That look never left his eyes. Whatever he was thinking, I was afraid of it. It gave me and bad feeling. Plus, I knew it was about me. Well, I didn't really know, but I had a good feeling it was.

As I got out of the car Annie came out of the house. She was ready in her clubbing attire - a red corset with black lining at the sides, along with black leather skinny jeans. Yeah, that's right Annie loves leather.

"Annie, I still have to get ready don't rush. We have all the time in the world." I shook my head at her.

"Well, hurry your sexy ass up. I am ready to party!" She sang as she shook her ass. I just giggle and went into the house.

After I had dressed in a tight fitting black and white top that had a peephole at the breast area and some skinny black jeans we drove to the club. Annie pulled me to the dance floor first thing. It was not long until we found ourselves some hot dance partners - Annie a semi-muscular man and me a tall lanky guy that still had a masculine strength to him. It felt nice to grind and bump with random people. I know that sounds bad, but there is just something about dancing with people you've never met before.

I whispered to Annie that I was going to get a drink. I stood at the bar with a margarita in my hand, scanning the dance floor for a new potential dance partner. That is when I saw him, Dave. "Shit," I said under my breath as I turned away from the dance floor. I had to get to Annie before he spotted me. I put down my unfinished drink and quickly glanced

behind me to see where he was. He was walking to the bar. I did not know if he had seen me but I was not going to take any chances. I slid away in some kind of made up spy move, and if I was not in this situation I would have laughed.

I spotted Annie dancing with the same partner and made a mad dash to her. I grabbed her arm and whispered in her ear, "Annie, Dave is here." My voice shaky. Her eyes grew wide and she nodded. We rushed to the door, but we were too late. I felt a strong hand grip my elbow.

"I wondered where you had gone too." He pulled me up to meet his eyes.

"Get your fucking hands off of me, Dave." I glared at him.

He gave out a deep laugh. The forced me against the wall. I could hear Annie in the background trying to kick and fight him, but she always was weak and Dave was fairly large man.

"I want you to know that it has been way too long, Missy." He spoke in my ear as he thrust himself against me.

I began to tell him to fuck off but his lips crashed to mine. The lips that at one time sent me into a dizzy spell and make me grow weak in the knees. This time it sent sparks of fury throughout my body causing my fists to shake.

My teeth began to grind as a jerked my face away. "You asked for it you dumb shit."

"What is that supposed to mean?" He questioned as he tilted his head back and to the side. In doing this he gave me just the right angle to punch him. And so, I did. I felt his nose crunch, in addition to a few crunches in mine fist. But at the moment I did not feel the pain. I grabbed Annie's hand in my good one, and we ran.

We ran to her car and she got in the drivers set. "Are you okay, Missy?" My hand began to throb. All I wanted to do was flex it but I knew that would not help.

"Well, if my hand was not broken I would be giddy with joy. That felt so fucking good." I laughed into the now silent car.

"We need to get you to the hospital. I don't know if mentally there is something wrong with you or if it is physical." He shook her head disapprovingly whilst I grinned to myself.

We made it home with my hand all wrapped up and braced. I did not break it. The doctor said "One more ounce of power and it would have been. You can give a mean punch," while he smiled at me in amazement. I was pretty much proud of myself. I did not even care about the pain. All I cared for was that I had caused him some much needed pain.

We walked in the door and Annie went to get me some ice and an aspirin. I walked through the house looking for Jace. I came to the stairs that lead to the basement and heard voices and a rerun of a football game.

"...I just don't know. She won't even let my fuck her..." It was Jace's voice, and those words hurt me. Is that

really all the he wanted form me? I felt my breath stop and my eyes begin to burn, but I still listened.

"Well, do you love her?" Jason asked. This time I held my breath on purpose. Wanted to know the answer but afraid of what it may be.

There was a long silence and my eyes began to burn again - so he didn't love me like I thought. "Man, I have always loved her but..." I did not get to hear the rest because Annie came, but I did not care. He loves me. I could not help but let the happiness run throughout my veins. It was all I could do not to jump up and down and sing with joy. My much worn smile spread across my face again. I silently thanked myself for not giving up hope.

"What are you smiling about? You punched a guy and hurt yourself. How can that make you happy?"

I just shrugged my shoulders and grinned to myself as I took the aspirin and ice from her.

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Again, sorry it took so long.

Thanks to my new fans and my old ones.

and like always Vote and comment!

I am spending a few days with my friends we are doing a Christmas thing so it will be at least 2 day till i even start the next.

Chapter 20

The Art of Hope (20)

WARNING

Sexual Content! I have marked the part so you can skip it. I did not rate this R because i have heard that many people can't read it if it is. I don't know if that is true but I don't want to deprive you from reading.

With this said. I really don't want to hear it if you felt uncomfortable reading it. I know that sounds mean but i marked it so yeah...

Enjoy!

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Chapter 20

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I was in my dress and Annie in hers. She had her hair gathered on top of the her head in an elegant braid. Her dress hugged her waist and fell elegantly to the floor. It was fairly simple. No sparkly or different colors just white and that was it. But that fit her. Her makeup was done in a way where it was almost unseen, so natural and soft I wanted to touch it just to see if it would come off.

But as much as she looked put together, she was not. She was shaking with nerves. Her face looking pale and sickly.

"Are you okay?" I asked for the hundredth time.

She just nodded.

"What is there to be nerves about? Unless you don't love him. You do love him, Right?" I looked at her. If she said no I would panic.

She began to give hysterical giggles. "Missy, are you stupid? Of course, I love him. I am here. It's just so life changing. I don't know what to do. I have never been married before."

I let out a sigh. "Thank God. I thought that I was going to have to tell everyone that the wedding was off." I smiled at her.

"Funny..." She started taking deep breaths to calm herself.

"You know. I wonder if you will be nerves tonight on your honeymoon. I sure hope not. It would be strange for you to have to call me. I mean I know what I got you makes you look like some bad ass spy striper but if you go this nuts wearing that much clothes I don't know if I should let you take it." I spoke to her trying not to laugh.

But she did. Now, she was talking deep breaths to stop her giggling. "That. Is one. Thing I don't. Need help with." He spoke between laughter. As she began to calm down she spoke again. "You on the other hand..." I glared at her.

She just stared right back. Then I remembered what Jace had told Jason 'I have always loved her..." and that same smile broke across my lips.

"What are you smiling about?" Annie asked with all nerves gone.

"I think I am going to change that." I smiled to myself.

"Change what?" She question raising one eyebrow.

"The 'you on the other hand' part. I am not scared anymore."

Her mouth opened to an O and then she gave me a sly smile. "I knew it. So, what changed your mind?"

"I heard him talking to Jason last night. He said 'I have always loved her...' or something like that." I know he had not said anything to me about love, but it is hard to tell someone your feelings. Plus I am hoping he will tonight. "But today is about you!" I quickly changed the subject.

Annie's wedding was perfect. It was small and sweet. When I saw the way Jason looked at her, I almost melted. I wondered if that was the way I looked at Jace and the way he looked at me. It has just been so long since we could really be alone together. I missed the two of use, but truth be told, we never really had any alone time. Now that we do we are cleaning up

after Annie's wedding. That's okay, we are almost done.

I put down the present I was carrying to Annie's bed room. Jace was standing facing away from me. I walk over to him and wrapped my arms around him. He tensed for a second then relaxed. I leaned my head against his back and just hugged him. I felt whole. I never wanted to let go. I let go for only a second to come around to his face. Again I wrapped my arms around him but this time his neck. He slowly wrapped his arms around me as I laid a sweet, soft, short, loving kiss on his lips and pulled away.

"Let's get this cleaned up and then go get some take out?" I asked.

He just nodded. The worry line still carved into his face. It was killing me not knowing what caused it. Every time I would ask he would shake his head and say something like 'just being away from my job.' But I was his job, right?

We had finished with the house. Everything was back in its place. Jace had gone to get takeout. It was now 11:00 and I was afraid that my time with him was

running out. We never got to be alone. But I knew that came with being a royal - not having me time.

I went back to the guest room. I turned down the covers and popped in some movie. G.I. Joe I think. And I waited for Jace to come back. My mind never really zoned in on the movie. It was one Jace the whole time. The one question was, Am I going to do it tonight? I wanted to and everyone knew he wanted to, but I was afraid it was too soon. What if things did not work out? I know it will be hard with me and him not allowed to 'be together' but you can't help who you love. And I loved Jace.

I went to turn down the TV because I knew I heard Jace come in, but when I pushed to button down with my thumb pain crept up my wrist. I howled out in pain. I had forgotten about it, again. It really did not hurt unless I used my thump I guess I pulled that muscle or something.

As I was holding it in my other hand Jace came bounding in with his hands full of food. He sat it on the side table and came over to me.

"What happened? Are you okay? Do you need some ice?" He questioned concerned as he took my sprained hand gingerly.

"No Honey, I just forgot about it. I'm fine." He went to turn away. But I grabbed his shirt with my good hand and pulled him into a kiss.

Just like every time, I parted my lips for him instantly and he entered. The hair on the back of my neck stood up and I softly moaned and the taste of his mouth, so clean and fresh I could kiss him all the time. I brought my good hand up to his hair and tangled it there, trying to pull myself closer. I was getting ready to run my hand down his abs when he pulled away.

He laughed an uneasy laugh at my sad expression and added "Let's eat first, Okay?" I just nodded my head as he distributed the food.

Mexican! Mmm, so good. One of my favorite foods. We snacked away as we watched the ending of the movie we had no clue was about. It was action packed so it was not so bad. I was leaned up against the wall and as close to Jace as I could get. He was so

quiet, and that worried me. Was him being away from his 'job' that hard on him? I sure hope not. I thought he was so ready for 'us' time. I finished with the last bit of food and decided that it was time for a shower or a bubble bath. I am thinking bubble bath.

"I am going to take a bubble bath." I said in a seductive voice. I was hinting.

"Okay," he did not even turn away from the movie "Don't take too long I want to shower too." He finished in a flat voice. I may have been hinting, but he was not getting.

My shoulders slumped and I trudged into the bathroom and ran my bath. The smell of lavender calmed my uneasiness. For the first time I think I felt like Jace did. I wanted him and he didn't even act like he wanted me back. A wave of rejection washed over me. I tried to focus on the warmth of the bubble bath, my mother, my new life as a princess, Annie's wedding, or anything that would get my mind off of him.

Before I knew it the water was cold. I grabbed my towel and wrapped it around me. I padded over to

the sink and washed my face and ran de-frizzer in my curly hair. I grabbed my rode and wrapped it around my body, placed my brace back on my hand, and trudged into the guest room. The TV was still on and Jace lay shirtless on the bed. The shadow the TV cast on his perfection was irresistible. The blue light throwing his ads and face into sharp angels made my mouth water. He glanced at me as I stood there and thanked my lucky stars that he was here. I needed him. I wanted him. I had to have him. NOW. Every pump of blood dared me to take a step closer. And so, I did.

Sexual Content

I gently leaned down over top of the bed and kissed his lips gingerly. I held it there for just a second before I crawled on top of him - straddling him - not breaking our kiss. I ran my tongue across his lips begging for entrance. He seemed unresponsive, but I did not give up. I think his was trying not to push me like he was before, and that made me want him more. I nibbled on his bottom lip expertly. Warm vibrations ran throughout my body. Finally, he let me

in and I went to work. He quickly took over though and placed his hands on my hips. I moaned as he trailed kisses down my neck.

I tilted my head to the side to let his lips trail down more. He was slowly pulling my rode off of my right shoulder, but then traced back up to my spot in the corner of my neck. I groaned and involuntarily rolled my hips. He moaned out in pleasure as his erection grew under me.

Not being able to hold himself anymore he tore open my robe and turned us over placing him over top of me. My body was humming for him. My hand ran down his abs as he caressed my neck once more. My hands were in hot pursuit for his jeans. From the shaking in them I could not unbutton them. He leaned back and off the bed to take them off for me, and I completely removed my robe. My heart burning for him in just the short time that he was gone.

I opened my legs for him, and he placed himself there. I felt his manhood press on the inside of my legs and I shuddered. I gripped the sheets to the side

of me and my wrist called on in pain but I did not care. He hovered outside of me as he trailed kisses down my neck and to my breast. My back arched without my brain telling it to. "Mmmm" was what had come out of his mouth. I wrapped my good hand in his hair holding him closer as I groaned and moaned. His hands lightly traced my sides and down to untangle my legs from him. I let go of his hair, and arched my back again at the feel of him touching me.

He situated himself a lightly poked at my entrance. I tilted my head back and closed my eyes waiting to be filed with his love. It never came. I opened my eyes and met his.

"What?" I gowned impatiently.

"Protection?" He whined.

I just smiled and let out a deep breath. "I am on the pill."

I lean up and kissed him with more love than I knew I had.

He slowly entered me and slowly out again. My legs clenched tight around him as he speed up not being able to contain himself.

Who the fuck said that when you 'made love' it needed to me slow and loving. Hell, I was impatient and Jace gave me just what a wanted.

End of sexual content

I lay in Jace's arms. My breath now steady and the feel of him inside me was gradually fading. I thought my heart could not hold anymore love, and I was so very wrong. He was fast asleep. It had been a good hour from the... event, but I just could not sleep. I was peaceful and serene, but I just did not want this moment to end. So, I stayed awake.

I thought about how perfect everything was coming together in my life. I had Jace, my father, Katie, and even my mother back. I gently kissed Jace's chest and whispered a low I love you.

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Ok, so i woke up at 6:00 this morning and i felt bad about the last one being short so I began writing and look at what I did A whole chapter.

Well, i am off to pack and get ready to hand with my besties! Have a great day.

And like always.

Vote and Comment. PlZ and thanks!

Chapter 21

The Art of Hope (21)

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Chapter 21

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Christmas Eve had arrived. I felt the warmth that Christmas always brings, the smell, the hope, the peacefulness, but most of all the love.

I decided I would take a late evening walk, even if it was late afternoon and almost dark. The cold fought to chill my skin under my warm jacket, but felt it only on the soft cheeks of my face. I took in a deep breath; it cleared my mind to feel the cold air in my

lungs. I walked along the thick brush and woods. Being here in the woods of my soon to be country - Tesoro di Gioiello - made it feel like I was so far from home. It also made my 'job' feel real. I, Missy - small town girl with a rotten past - was going to run a Kingdom. Granted that Kingdom was the size of Rhode Island (USA), but it still scared the shit out of me.

I had to admit I was scared to death. I needed someone to tell me I could do this, to tell me I would be the best they have ever seen. Although I knew it would be a lie I needed to hear it. I sighed. I had to be strong. I could do this. Right? Then I thought of the things I would soon have to do. I would have to "come out" with a ball and everything. I would have to speak in front of all the people in this country. Every persons well being would be in MY hands.

I did not understand why I was so worried. I mean Tesoro di Gioiello is just a little island in the middle of that Atlantic Ocean. Right? Nothing important happens. It's just a land of farmers and Kings and a prince and me. This is nothing I told myself. Then I

started to realize I put off this "conversation" with myself for too long. I should have thought about this BEFORE I moved here and turned my life around.

Shaking my head I turned to go back to my new home.

Christmas Eve here was nothing like back home. Back home Annie and I would sit around and drink hot chocolate. Listen to some old Elvis Christmas records. Here there was a grand party. Every important person to the kingdom was here. But I was locked up in my room. I could have went if people knew that I existed. That was okay by me though. I was curled up in my new room in the family wing. The dusty cream walls gave the room a unique homey feeling. The basic color was brown with other colors to brighten it up. I must say I loved it. I could spend hours in here, but I was sick of being alone on freaking Christmas Eve.

A tap came on the door. I jumped up and ran to it, hoping it was Jace. We had gotten back a week ago and I had only seen him in passing once. He and his father had the week off to go home and do family

stuff. They had arrived back this morning; I had yet to see him.

I swung open the door to reveal a tired Emily. "Hi, Emily. What's up?" I asked in a not so happy voice.

"Well, you're in a bad mood. Maybe I will just go..." She let it trail off. I felt guilty.

"Sorry, You just not the person I was hoping to see. I know it sounds bad but it is true. I won't lie."

She looked up at me curiosity in her eyes. "Eric?" She asked.

"Um, NO. He just wishes." You see when Jace said don't tell anyone. I told no one.

"Anyways," She went on "Can I get you advice on something?" She blushed.

"Anything. Come on in." I was glad I had a friend other than Jace. And I was also glad that I could talk to someone. I was going a little nuts.

We sat on my bed facing one another. "Well..." She blushed again. "There is this guy."

"Really? May I asked who?" I was excited to know some gossip. Life was getting so bland.

"Well, I really don't want anyone to know until I know that it will work out." She turned her head. "That is what I wanted to talk to you about. I don't know anything about boys."

"Oh," Was all I could say.

She turned her head again and looked out my window, a light blush upon her face. "I was wondering if you could help me?" She spoke in such a small voice. I felt sorry for the poor girl. She was 18 years old and still knew nothing of guys. I had to help. I felt her pain. I knew all too well how it felt to want something you don't know how to get.

"Sure, What did you want to know?" I asked.

Turns out she has been crushing on this guy for about a year now. He works here and they dance plenty of times at the servants club. She wanted to make them official. She wanted more. And I told her as long as it was not Eric that she should go for it. I

told her no fear is good fear. That is a lie, but when it comes to dating it is what is needed.

By this time it was around midnight and I was getting deathly tired. I had been lately, but I think that is because I am not always doing something. I had no one to take care of, and that was making me become lazy.

I lay in my bed hopping that Jace would sneak in and sleep with me tonight. I was missing him so. But unlike before I gave myself to him, not just my mind and heart wanted him but my body begged for him too. As I waited my eyelids drew together and I drifted into a deep dreamless sleep.

I woke in the early morning. The sun was not yet up to greet me. It was my Christmas tradition - get up early and make breakfast for whoever I was with. But this year I was not sure if that was appropriate. So, I grabbed my sweat pants and went down stairs to make some coffee for everyone. It had not been long when I heard heavy footsteps bounding down the stairs and into the kitchen.

Without looking to see who it was I asked, "Want some Christmas Coffee?" In my most cheerful voice as I finished up fixing mine to perfection.

"Aw, Babe, Thank you so much." Eric said as he swiped the cup from my hand and took a big sip.

I narrowed my eyes and strode over to him. Then I gave him an innocent smile. "Aw, Babe, thanks for taste testing it, but I think I will drink this one. You can always make your own." I took the coffee out of his hand and took a big swig for myself. I was letting him of easy. I mean, it's Christmas spread the joy, right?

He just chuckled and shook his head as he fixed himself one. He seemed to be in some kind of mood so I just left it at that.

We both ended up in the den next to the fire. I stared at the flames and drank my coffee and Eric was lost in a book. I never knew he read. I noticed his light hair framed his tanned skin and brought out his sliver-grey eyes more when lit by fire. Looking at him reading was almost like watching a baby sleep. And in that moment I saw him as cute and sweet, not the

sexy asshole he is. I smiled to myself think how I never could have pictured this moment before - Eric and I sitting by a fire on Christmas, not fighting.

"What are you smiling about? Are you picturing me naked?" He smirked. He always did joke but there was something else in his tone. I acted as if I did not notice.

I cocked my head to the side and tried to put some smolder in my eyes. "If you only knew the things I was picturing in my head." Then I ended with a wink. His sliver-grey eyes turned to almost black with lust. Toying with him was too much fun.

At that moment my father came into the room rolling up the cuff of his shirt. He glanced at me and then to Eric, and a proud smile crossed his face.

"Good Morning you two." He gave another quick glance at Eric, like they had a conversation going on between one another. I wonder what it was about, but then thought better of it. The King and Eric were like father and son, well more like father and the next in line for the throne. I found myself hopping that one day I would get that look.

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Eric's POV

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It was Christmas and I had not slept a wink. Not one minute and the fucking sun was not even up. I just gave up and headed down the stairs.

The smell of coffee engulfed me as I sleepily jogged down the stairs. The first thing I see is Missy standing at the counter making coffee. Her back was away from me and it saddened me that she had put some pants on. Maybe it would have brightened my mood to see her in her short shorts.

"Want some Christmas Coffee?" She asked in an unfamiliar cheerful voice. She must be one of the 'Cheery Christmas' people. Oh, God, please fucking help me. I don't know if I can take all this cheerfulness and shit.

Let's just say I was determined to put someone's Christmas down. "Aw, Babe, Thank you so much." I grabbed her cup and took a big gulp. It was perfect

just like I liked it. Almost black with just a little sugar and even less milk.

Her eyes narrowed for a second before she walked over and gave an innocent smile, "Aw, Babe, thanks for taste testing it, but I think I will drink this one. You can always make your own." That's when she walked over and politely took the cup out of my hand and took a drink. So much for pissing her off, she is indestructible. I was not in the mood anyways, so I just chuckled and shook my head as I fixed my own.

I was in the den reading 'Under the Dome' by Stephen King when she walked in with her cup of coffee. I was highly aware of her being in here. I could not even focus on the book. I looked up and she was flat out staring at me with a genuine smile on her face. It irked me a little to have her stare at me like that. I thought she hated me anyway.

"What are you smiling about? Are you picturing me naked?" What was this sudden interest in me? I mean her and Jace where now completely 'official', he was hers and she was his and all that lovely crap. So why in the hell is she gawking at me? Not that I minded. I

could take her right here and now, if that's what she wanted.

She cocked her head to the side and her eyes began to smolder. Instantly I thought of that night. "If you only knew the things I was picturing in my head." That sentence caused the dark clouds of a sleepless night to turn slightly brighter. I know my eyes darkened to lust, but I could not help it. Then again I knew she was just poking fun. Wishful thinking, I guess.

I heard footsteps but I was consumed in my own thoughts to turn and see who it was. Then the Kings voice filled my ears. "Good Morning you two."

I turned to give him a good morning look. He was glancing back and forth between me and Missy before resting on me. With his eyes he asked me if anything was going on between his daughter and me, and with mine I told him no. But silently wishing to myself that we were both rolling around in my bed.

"I guess its present time?" Missy asked in that joyful voice again. I inwardly groaned. The one thing I

thought we had in common - hating the world - we didn't.

"Yeah, I am guessing so." The King said in an equally cheerful voice.

They briskly walked to the family room where the presents sat under an overly decorated tree. I walked slowly trying to muster up some cheerfulness. I hated disappointing the King and I would do and have done everything not to. He was the only man I have ever trusted and respected in a long time. I did not want to screw that up. And so, I put on a happy smile and tried to put some spring in my step.

"Dad, I want you to open mine first. It's not much, but it's special." I could not help but compare her to my six year old sister. Missy had that glow that children got at Christmas and with her dark blond curly hair piled up on the side of her head and her being giddy with glee did not help that fact. I chuckled to myself - how can a woman that I find completely attractive and that I think about banging every fucking time I see her remind me of my sister?

I pushed the thoughts away and watched as the King looked through a scrapbook. "...I know you hated not being there for me. So, this is a photo album of me from the age of six until now." I caught the last of her rant.

"Missy..." The King was speechless. He was never speechless. As he looked through the book more he smiled. A real smile; something I have only seen on his face when Missy was around. This was different than the cold, strong, never-crying man that practically raised me. Missy made him a softy. WHY - I mentally threw my hands up at the sky - am I the only tuff one around here? He never did finish what he was going to say but I began a different topic.

"Here sir, I got you a little something." I handed him a small box. He began to open it and stopped when he saw it.

"Is this...?" His eyes meet mine in shock.

I could not help but smile. "Yes Sir that is your great-grandfather's pocket watch. It works now. I also had the gold cleaned and touched up." He had been talking about getting it fixed up and re-worked. I

knew it was not much of a Christmas present, but it is hard to buy for a King.

"I thank you both. Now, it's time for the two of you to open my presents." He spoke as he clapped his hands together once. The cheerfulness fucking over flowing. It was almost too much to take in.

Missy opened hers first. She was speechless also. The King had given her his mothers ring. It had a red ruby with diamonds framing it in a circle. I had to say myself it was one of the most perfectly cut rings I had seen in my life. I could tell Missy loved it by the way her face had that glow and that big ass smile.

I opened mine - a small box the size of my palm. I shook it first. It made a clinging sound like... Keys! I quickly shredded the paper to get to a set of keys.

"It's in the front yard. Have fun." The King spoke with knowing in his tone.

I ran, yes, I ran and was greeted by an off-road, forest green, Jeep. The King always knew what I needed this time of year - distraction.

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Hope you liked it. I am so sorry that it took me so long. Just some things I had to take care of and it put me in a bum kind of mood.

So like always.

Vote, Comment, tell a friend. Please and Thanks

Also a BIG BIG BIG BIG thank you to EternalxEssence for putting my name out there!!

Chapter 22

The Art of Hope (22)

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Chapter 22

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I stared at the ring again. It was cut in a triangular shape with diamonds weaving into the silver band. Inside the band I saw something I had not seen before - the words 'Meus filia' or My daughter inscribed on the inside. He said that it was once a gold ring but that the silver looked more like me so he had had it changed. Now I knew he had it changed to put these words in it. These two words would not normally mean so much to an average person but to

me they meant the world. (http://www.yourfashionblog.com/wp-content/uploads/ruby-ring.jpg)

I wondered if my dinky gift made my father feel this way. I sure hope that it did. And it was nice to have both of my parents now. This must be what it feels like to have a family. And for the first time in a long time I prayed thanks to God above.

I wondered idly what was up with Eric. He seemed down. I could not help but think that we made a friendship connection today. I know we did not say anything important. But I felt like he let down some of his guard today - showing me that he does have feelings. I also learned something about him. That he reads, and I must say that reading does not fit his persona. And in thinking of Eric, I thought of that night. Not in the lust kind of way, but in a wondering kind of way. If we had never met would we be able to be friends? I will never know but it does not hurt to wonder. It would be nice to be friends with the man that my father trust so.

I stood up shaking the thoughts away and strolled into the bathroom. It was now late night - 11:24. I had plans to give Jace his Christmas present, but first I wanted to smell completely of lavender. And so, I ran myself a hot steaming bath. It had been a total of 10 days from the moment I had made love to Jace, and I - being the greedy person I am - wanted more.

I took in a sharp breath of pain as I settled in more comfortably and my breast brushed to side of the tub. The past two days my breast have been extremely tender. It hurt to just brush my arm against them some times. I must be getting ready to start. I was about my time of the month, and the doctor said that the pill tends to make PMS worse because of having so few periods.

After I had relaxed in the bath, I put on the skanky lingerie Annie had given me. I had to say I felt like covering myself up even with it on. It left nothing to the imagination - classic black lingerie, but it was all see-threw. And when I say all, I mean all. It had a bra that did nothing of the lift that it should, and a G sting thong for my bottom half was smaller than

anything that I had in my undergarment collection. And to add to the 'sexy' factor it had a hot pink shawl - it buttoned right between the breasts and drifted out and to my thigh.

I had to say I felt like running back into my closet and putting on some real clothes, but this was Christmas and Jace deserved a little something, something. I went back into the bathroom and grabbed my silk dressing gown and a bottle of lotion. I sat on my bed and squeezed some lotion into my hands and began softening my skin. Not only did it make my skin silky-smooth but it gave my tan a deeper glow.

I padded into my closet to grab my black pumps. After sliding my feet into them I went to the mirror and did a slow turn. I had to say the pumps made my ass look firm and tight. But I decided against them. I did not want to risk getting caught in my robe and pumps - people would know something's up.

When I was done I stole one more quick glance at myself. I should thank Annie for the Christmas present. This really was going to be a 'night to

remember'. Still feeling a little self conscious I began giving myself a pep talk.

As I walked down the hall to Jace's room I remembered all the things he had down for me. How when Dave and I had broken up he was there with me as I cried myself to sleep. How he always covered my shift if I had to take care of Katie, how he was there when I was almost raped. I sighed. I was completely in love with this man, and for the first time I was not afraid to say it. At this moment in my life I could not see myself without him. He said once - 'As long as you need me I will be here' and I was nice to know I had a rock to lean on.

The door was closed and I thought that maybe he was not here. Then I heard I soft moan. I froze. Was he hurt? In a panic I tried to open the door. But my clammy hands just slipped on the door knob.

"Yes, Yes, I am almost...." A female voice panted before it turned into a scream. My breath hitched. No, Fuck, No this is not happening. I must have the wrong room.

I took a step back and looked around the hall. No, this was the right room. My heart sank to my ass and a started to shake my head in denial.

Gathering up what nerves I had, I gripped my hand on the knob.

A deep husky growl came before I opened the door. "Fuck," a deep grunt then "Emily." I gasp for a breath but it did not come.

My whole world could not be crumbling around me. Not like this...

Gasping for breath again I opened the door.

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I know, I know. Anyways. I hope you enjoyed and let me say "Let the drama begin!"

And sorry it's so short. I wanted to get something out fast. And i think i did. :)

Like always vote, comment, and tell a friend. Please and Thanks

-newhope

Chapter 23

The Art of Hope (23)

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Chapter 23

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The comments... Oh I loved them! I loved them so much I began writing the next chapter. And here it is.

Enjoy!

Recap:

My whole world could not be crumbling around me. Not like this...

Gasping for breath again I opened the door.

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The room was dark. Only the light form hallway lit the room into a faint dusty glow. There they lay, on the bed. Jace hunched over Emily, both butt naked. I sucked in a deep gush of air, it caught in my throat. The two of them must not have heard me because they carried on.

I felt my heart being ripped apart. No, not ripped. More like someone stuck a screwdriver in my chest and turned it on making the organ spin around the tip into a ringed out blob. I clasped my hand over my heart in an effort to stop the physical pain.

I knew I should look away with a blush, but I couldn't. Some unknown force made me watch as someone I love took advantage of a teenage girl.

"Shit. So... tight." Jace breathed breathlessly. I felt my supper rise to the back of my mouth and I began to gag. A scurry to Jace's bathroom saved Jace's floor.

"Missy?" He asked not even sounding shocked.

I found myself back at the dresser shaking my head in denial again, my hand still pressed to my heart. But try as I may, the pain never subsided.

I searched for Jace's eyes hopping it was just someone who looked like him. Emily, after the shock had washed from her features, grabbed the covers and wrapped her naked self up.

"Missy, I... I... promise... I had. No clue. I.. am.. so-" I cut her off with my left hand.

"Just leave." It surprised me how dangerously calm my voice was.

"But Missy, I didn't know." She pleaded with me shuffling to the door.

"Just GO!" I snapped at her and pointed to the door while still waiting for Jace's eyes to collide with mine.

The heart wrenching pain was turning into a burning revengeful fire of hate. How dare is cheat on me.

As Emily left and shut the door behind her, I picked up the nearest item off of his dresser - a book - and flung it straight for his once beautiful face.

"Fuck Missy, you cut my face wide open!" He screamed.

You cut my heart wide open I thought to him, but I was NOT going to let him know that. I grabbed the next thing on his dresser without looking. It was his cell. I used all my force and threw it at him.

"Bitch!" He yelled at me. I thought nothing of it. I was not the bitch in this situation.

I grabbed yet another thing. This time it was his iHome. With every last burst of energy I chucked it at him. Then proceeded to storm into the hall. He was not, is not, and will never be worthy of my words.

I got two good paces down the hall when I felt a tug at my robe making it come undone. I turned with a vengeance. He better not fuck with me right now, and luckily he covered himself up so that I could focus.

His eyes went wide. I smirked at the gash on his face, 'Yeah, that's right asshole. You missed out.' I thought to him, but my voice is something that he will never hear again.

"Missy," His voice was soft and regretful, but I could not believe it. Not after what her did. "I am sorry." His eyes meet mine and they looked like they held sincerity. "I.." Again I held my hand up cutting him off.

'Save it.' I thought to him again, but instead I turned briskly and began the trail to my room, not even bothering to cover myself.

The whole time I cursed myself. Now that I had found out he was banging some other chick, I could see all the signs. His withdrawnness at Annie's house, his nonexistence the past week and a half. Feeling a tear breech the edge of my vision I cut off the thinking. I tried with all my might to just block it out, to feel nothing. Right now, feeling nothing would mean the world.

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Eric's POV

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Twelve-thirty. Twelve fucking thirty, and the blessed sleep would not consume me. Not to mention the fact

that I have not slept in two fucking days. I rolled off my bed, thinking that I may get some ice cream.

In just my athletic shorts I padded my way down the hall. The sleepless nights were getting to me. I could hardly keep my feet moving one in front of the other. I had to look at the floor just to see if I was even moving them.

Hearing faint footsteps down the hall and I chanced a glance hoping I would not trip. I stopped died in my tracks and gawked as Missy came down the hall in see-threw fucking lingerie. The black lace material showed every line of her perfect body. That pink shawl did nothing to cover up what the lingerie missed, and she left her dressing gown wide open. As she took another step the muscles in her legs flexed and I knew I must be dreaming. I even pinched myself; I had to be dreaming. Right? Still gawking I watched her pass. Her head down as mine was earlier.

And I, being the horn dog that I am, could not pass up this opportunity - even if it was a dream. Finding the energy I jogged down to her, and softly touched her

arm. Missy slowly turned, but still looked at the floor. "What?" She asked. Her voice sounded like it came from a forty year old woman. One that had seen more troubles than I could imagine - and I had seen my share.

I pawned it off as her being tiered and closed in on her like a lion on its prey. I let my hand travel down to her hip, pushing her every curve to my firm body. I could feel her warm skin under the fabric. Surprisingly she did not push me away. In fact she did not even look up at me, but like hell that would stop me from getting what I wanted. With my free hand I placed in on her neck and ran it across her collar bone to the tip of her chin. She did not shiver, she did not move, and she did not fight me. What was up? Getting impatient for a response I tilted her head to mine. Still her eyes did not meet mine, the wall and biting down on her lower lip.

"Missy, look at me." I growled, surprising myself with my eagerness.

"Please, just let me go. Eric, I am not in the mood." I could tell that there was an edge of hurt in her tone,

but her standing in front of me looking and smelling like a sex symbol was more than I could take. I traced the tips of my fingers back along her neck and down her arm. She grabbed it with her opposite hand, causing my attention to come back to her face.

"Please not right now." I watched her lips quiver ever so slightly, before I meet her eyes. Her once bright with life green eyes, now had a dark, empty, cold look to them. She looked... lifeless. Heartbroken, almost. Something in them caused me to take a step back, but not looked away.

"Sorry." I said so low almost I could not hear it.

For a brief moment I thought she was going to burst into tears, and it brought an unfamiliar stab of sadness to my unloving heart. Quickly, as if she had known I saw her sadness, she covered it over with the empty, cold glare.

"It's okay... I, guess... I just don't feel up to it today." Giving a half hearted smirk. No, it was less than half hearted.

If I was honest with myself she was scaring me a little.

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Missy's POV

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I rolled over for approximating the hundredth time and glanced at the clock - 1:21. Sleep had yet to grace me. Every time I would close my eyes I saw Jace calling out Emily's name. That is what hurt the most. The whole time I spent recalling the night we had sex and not once do I remember him calling MY name out. I had to say it almost killed me, but I was not going to cry and feel sorry for myself; crying never got me anywhere.

Rolling out of bed and grabbing my shorts, I thought I would rest my mind of troubling thoughts and watch a movie.

When I opened the theater room, a movie was already going on. Disappointed I turned to leave.

"Missy?" I knew right away that it was Eric. There was just no copying that British-French accent.

"Yeah?" I replied.

"You do know that there is more than one sofa in here, right? You're welcome to watch with me. Thing is I don't know if 'G.I. Joe' is your kind of movie." I could hear the smirk in his tone.

I was caught between a rock and a hard place. On one hand, I could stay and be distracted by an action film, but have to put up with Eric. On the other, I could go back to my room a wallow in my own self pity. I picked movie.

I laid down on the sofa beside Eric's chair, feeling his gaze on me. I zoned in on the movie, but I missed the first half so I knew nothing that was going on. Minutes and minutes of blowing things up sent me into a restless sleep.

***

I was in a soft bed, when I screaming baby woke me. Springing up and into action I ran down a hallway, complete with white washed walls and into a bright

blue room. Running to a cradle I grabbed up a small bundle and held it close. I was viewing myself, like I was watching a movie.

"Shh, Matthew, its okay momma's here. Are you hungry?" I lightly bounced him as I padded to a rocking chair. Lifting up my shirt, I began to breast feed. Not even one minute later a tall dark haired figure was at the doorway.

"Is he okay?" Knowing the voice at once - Jace, I shuddered. He came to stand behind me and put a hand on my shoulder. "I love you Mrs. Andrews."

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Eric's POV

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The movie was over and all that could be heard was Missy's soft breathing from the sofa beside me. I cut the television off and went to wake her.

Her dark blonde curls thrown into disarray around her head, she looked tuckered out. Her soft pink lips still turned down ever so slightly at the ends. How

could anyone look so sad when sleeping? I thought to myself.

Not wanting to wake her I gathered her up into my arms and carried her to her room. She was light to me. Her small frame fit perfectly in my arms, and her sweet aroma of lavender began to calm me down. Good, maybe I will get some sleep before I have to go to that hell hole I once called home.

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And remember...

Vote, comment, tell a friend. Please and thanks!

Chapter 24

The Art of Hope (24)

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Chapter 24

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Missy's POV

Sunlight cast my eyelids to pink and warmed my face. I blinked the sun away and rolled over, not quite ready to begin my day. But before I closed my eyes I glanced at the clock. Shocked by the time I jumped up and into action. It was 12:37. I had missed breakfast and lunch. I ran to the chair where my clothes and planner lay and noticed a note on top.

Missy,

Eric told me that you did not feel well last night. So take your time. Sleep it off, because I canceled everything on your schedule for the day. Get better soon, and when you wake up come see me in my office.

Love,

Dad.

I found it sweet that he signed it dad. But most of my brain was trying to think about how I got up here. Eric must have carried me, and told my father I was sick. What is up with this nice thing? Could he have known about my whole heart breaking problem? No. There is just now way. He is not that observant.

Seeing as dad thought I was sick I was just going to walk around in a tee-shirt and jeans. Padding to my closet I froze, on the floor lay some of Jace's clothing. I grabbed at my heart again as the pain pulsed to my fingertips. Cursing myself for my weakness, I stepped over them and grabbed my clothes quickly pushing thoughts of him in a guarded door.

The biggest task of my morning was finding a bra that did not cause my breasts pain. I ended up with an average tee-shirt bra but I had to put the loosest clip on and let the straps out some. I was going to have to go to the doctor and try a different birth control pill, but for now I will just quit taking them. After I showered and got dressed my stomach was screaming for me to have some lunch so before I went to see my father I munched on the leftovers. I must have been starving because I had two servings off fish and chips.

Cleaning up the dishes I made the mistake of letting my mind wonder. Images of Jace snuck out from behind my guard. It surprised, angered, and upset me at how good my memory was. I could feel his arms around me, his sky blue eyes burn into mine. Another pulse of pain shot throughout my body causing my knees to give out for a second. Luckily I caught myself on the countertop. Shaking my head to clear the thoughts away I closed the door and locked my them behind it leaving me feeling nothing.

I did not realize that someone was in the kitchen until Eric spoke up. "Damn, did you have ALL the leftovers? There was enough to feed four people, and I was hoping to have some before I had to leave." I knew he was teasing me but I had so much pent up aggression that I snapped.

"Fuck you, Eric. I was hungry." I threw the plate I was washing into the soapy water making bubbles splash onto my clothes. "Can you ever just grow up a little and not make some smartass remark about everything? God, I am so sick of you." I spat.

He looked shocked and maybe even hurt. "Sorry, Sorry, God take a chill pill." He said holding his hands up in surrender. "Damn, I just wanted something to eat."

Footsteps caused him to break eye contact. I did not look away. What was wrong with me? Why can't I keep my composer? "Oh hey, Jace. Shit, what happened to your face?" Eric ended in a questioning chuckle.

My eyes shot up and I made the mistake of look straight into his eyes. Just looking into those sky blue

eyes knocked the air out of my lungs. "Missy, Can we please talk about this? You need to know the whole story."

I saw him in bed with another woman. There is not a 'whole story' I thought. I turned to finish my dishes. Ignoring him was the best thing I could do for myself. But he would not let me have the chance. I felt his hand touch my arm. I went rigid, my breath caught, and my heart gave another gut wrenching throb. I knew it was not Eric because he was in my line of sight. "Come on sweets. We can work this out. Just let me-"

"Um man, Can I talk to you a second?" Eric said in haste. I felt Jace's hand leave my arm as he took a step away.

"Um, Yeah, Sure, I guess." And slowly as he walked away I gained my breathing back.

After Jace left the room Eric touched my arm and bent down to my eye level, "You okay?"

Was he really asking me if I was okay? After I just blew up on him? "Yeah, Yeah, why wouldn't I be

okay?" I asked trying to play my heartbreak off as nothing. He did not seem to buy it but left anyways.

I could hear them talking outside the kitchen door.

"What the fuck have you done? If the King finds out he will have your head. You do know that, right?" Eric whisper yelled.

"Fuck Eric, Just let me talk to her." Jace spoke in an angered tone.

"Not until you tell me what's going on." I could tell Eric was gritting his teeth together.

"Fuck, She caught me fucking Emily, Happy?" He sounded almost ashamed. Just him saying it made my head spin and my heart ache. I felt the tension in my head. That tension you get when holding back tears. But I was not going to cry. Not over that piece of shit.

"Hell, I told you to stay away. You know when the King finds out you're outta here." And here I was thinking Eric cared about me. When will I ever learn that I have to take care of myself?

"He won't!" Jace answered simply.

"Missy is his daughter..."

"She won't tell."

"I know she won't. She's to tough to cry to daddy." That did make me smile. "But even I can tell she is hurting, this won't slide past the King." And here I was thinking that I was hiding it so well.

"Why do you even care?" Jace accused. I was thinking the same thing.

"I don't know, it could be the fact that you're like a little brother to me. Or the fact the King is like the only father figure I have ever known." Little brother? How old was Eric?

"Only by two years, are you older." That makes him about four and a half years older than me. Wow, and her I thought he was the same age. Well, he acted younger. "And you want to get in her pants, so why is it so bad what I did?" I had to admit that was a good point.

"She knows all I want is sex, plus I would never fuck her without her wanting it, too. You know that. Plus, I did not lead her on and then drop her."

"That is why I need to talk to her." His voice rose and so did my hope. Hope that this was all a mistake, but then the images floated back along with the throbbing pain in my chest. A single tear rolled down my face and I quickly brushed it away and stopped listening to finish my dishes. I am not going to cry. I am not going to cry. I am NOT going to cry. I told myself over and over.

I was done cleaning and sitting at the bar. I wanted to go catch a nap, but I did not want to walk through the two of them. My eyelids grew heavy. How could I be sleepy, anyway? I had no clue but I was.

"Missy, Missy," I strong warm hand shook my shoulder.

I weakly open my right eye to see Eric smirking at me. "Good morning!"

"Fuck off!" I whispered and I closed my eye back and propped my head up with my hand.

"Ouch, what's with the mood?" He asked bluntly.

Earlier flooded back along with images of how I yelled at him. I opened both eyes and really looked at

him. "I really am sorry about that. I don't know what got into me." I was honest. He was the only one that knew what was going on, and I was pushing him to Jace's side.

"It's fine. I do understand, I'm not heartless. Now, come on. Your father wants to talk to us." He turned to leave.

"Hey, Eric?"

He turned and the sun hit is tan just right, making it a deep bronze color. "Yep?"

"Thanks, you know, for last night." I could not meet his eyes. Telling him thanks made me feel weak.

"Anytime babe, I like carrying you around." He added with a wink. "Now, let's go. I have to pack." Oh, yeah that's right he is staying with his parents for a week.

My father sat at his overly large desk. Eric and I sat in the elegant red leather chairs across from him.

"Missy, as you know you will soon be 'coming out' and will be meeting with all the royal families that are in contact with us." Dad said, and I started to

panic. Shit, on top of everything I have to put on a show for the royal families, and I still did not know if I could handle it. Reading my panicked face he continued, "I knew it would be a lot for you to take in, so I came up with this brilliant idea. I want you to go with Eric to meet his family." My mouth dropped.

"WHAT?" Eric's voice was fierce as he jumped up from his chair. I could not help put feel appalled. Was he that ashamed of me?

"Eric, Sit." My father said as if talking to a dog. "You, my boy, have no say in the matter." He turned back to me waiting for me to speak, but I couldn't.

"Listen Missy, this family has great ties with ours. Not only because of Eric, and I think it would be nice to ease you into it and if you meet this family first I know you can handle any family." It was too much for me. I felt like I was going to faint.

"This is a bad idea." Eric growled.

"Eric, I need you to be on my side about this. You will have to be with her every step of the way." That thought made me shiver with fear. Could I trust him?

Yeah sure, he was being nice right now but that does not make him trustworthy.

"You have no idea what you're getting her into." Eric admitted in a defeated tone.

"She can handle it." Then dad turned to me. "Will you do it? I have arranged everything all I need is you to say yes."

I thought about it for a second. There seemed to be more pros than cons. One, I will be away from Jace. Two, I will be getting my feet wet in the family business. Three, I get away from Jace. Four, I will not have to see Jace. "I'll do it!"

Eric looked at me as if he was counting on me to say no. "Shit" he muttered under his breath.

"Good," dad spoke "Go get packed you to are leaving in the morning."

I followed Eric's rigid form out of the door. As soon as we were in the hall he punched the wall. Well hell, I did not know he loathed me that much. I was about to pass him when he spoke. "You have no clue how much trouble you are in." I turned.

"All I know is that I want to get away. Because being here seems to cause me more problems." I spat at him all the while fighting against the burning pain in my chest. He face seemed to soften.

He said nothing. "That is what I thought." I headed to my room to pack.

"Missy?" He called.

"What?"

"If I let you go can you promise me something?" What could he want from me?

"Yeah." What did I have to lose?

"Talk to Jace when we get back." Tension coursed throughout my body as the ache came to my heart once more.

"No. I knew you were on his side, and that does not bother me. But I am not going to let you talk me into doing anything for him." The nerve he had. This whole time I thought he was being nice. Jokes on me I guess.

Before I knew it he was in my face. "Believe it or not, if you talk this out you will feel much better. Holding it in only cause's pain."

"It's the only choice I have. If you haven't noticed Jace was the only person I had here. The only person that knows me, and I am not about to let him see me as weak and broken." My voice just had to break on that last word.

That said understanding flashed in Eric's eyes. He said nothing but he seemed to be searching for something in my eyes. I just turned and walked away. I had had enough excitement for one day.

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I want to say thank you to all my fans. I was i bad writer and did not thank all of you individually and i am very sorry about that. I was just lazy. So this is your thanks --> THANK YOU!

I am letting you guys get warmed up to Eric right now. :)

One question...

Do you think she should talk to Jace? I already have the rest of the story planed out i just wanted to know if you guys want to know what happened with Jace.

Anyways, I am off to do some cleaning.

And Like Always,

Vote, comment, fan, and tell a friend. Please and thanks!

Chapter 25

The Art of Hope (25)

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Chapter 25

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Eric's POV

I lay across the sofa in the private jet. Missy was across from me in a white sun dress. Her arms wrapped around her knees. Call me a pervert but I kept glancing at her finely tuned legs. She did not even notice because she was staring out the window at the pink-orange clouds of the morning sky. It was

going to be a boring six hours if she was not even going to speak.

"Hey, Miss?" She did not even seem to hear me.

"Missy?" I spoke a little louder.

"What do you want?" She snapped, turning around. This was getting old. I was not being disrespectful or anything. Then I really looked at her, and she looked to be on the verge of tears.

Searching for something to distract her from her pain I blurted out the first thing that came to mind, "Want to play cards of something I am so bored?" The last thing I needed was an emotional girl on a six hour jet ride.

"We have not even been on here for an hour. Sometimes you remind me of a child." She chuckled.

"You did not answer my question," I reminded her.

"Sorry, but no. I never was big on playing cards." Well, damn what can we do now?

"Fine," I mumbled really sounding like a child before crossing my arms over my chest.

"But I would like to get my mind off things." She admitted. "So, if you can come up with something to do I would not mind it." As much as she tried to sound lighthearted I could hear the pleading in it. The pleading for someone, or something to take the thoughts out of her head.

"Sorry, but I got nothing."

"Okay then, tell me something?" She asked and as afraid as I was for her question to come I could not say no to her forest green eyes.

"And that would be..." I trailed off expecting her to jump in.

She did, "Do you hate me so much to not want me to see your family?" I thought I saw hurt in her eyes but she always had hurt in them lately.

"No." I really did not want to talk about it. She stood and padded over to me. I could not help but notice the swing in her hips and the way the thin fabric clung to her every curve. As she set down a waft of lavender exploded in my nose-a smell that I now associated with her.

"Then why?" She asked while hugging her knees like she was trying to hold herself together.

"Well, Missy, not everyone comes from a nice family. One with a mother that takes care of the family and fathers respect their sons and daughters." I spat. Then glanced at her shocked face thru narrow eyes.

Suddenly she stood and her fist began to shake. "You are such a dick. You know that? You have no idea about my life so I would appreciate it if you but the fuck out." Even though I could not see her I knew she was gritting her teeth, but I did not give a fuck.

She sat at the window again, and I could have sworn I was a tear slide down her face. She did not move to wipe it away. She should have known better than to push my buttons like that. I mean, fuck, she just called me a child ten seconds ago. Minutes ticked by and I swear Missy was holding in a sob. The guilt was consuming me; I just got so defensive when someone questioned my family.

I went over to her and placed my hand on her tense shoulder. She jerked away quickly, "Get your fucking hands off of me." She whimpered.

"I'm sorry about earlier. I did not mean it. I was just... caught off guard." She did not even seem to care about my apology.

"Whatever..." She said still glancing out the window, arms hugging knees.

I crouched down bringing my face just below hers. "Missy, I really am sorry. I just... my family... we... I don't like them." I never knew how to put into words how I felt about my family. I truly wanted to love them, and I guess I did, a little.

"Yeah, I know the feeling." She mumbled still not turning to look at me.

I was starting to get angry that she would not just let it go. "Missy, you are going to need me this week. I don't want to have you around me all the time if you are going to get offended by everything I do or say. So will you please just let it go?" Finally she looked down at me.

Questioning on her face she asked, "Then why won't you tell me about them. Why do you just lock up and go all... all... ape shit when I ask?"

I knew I would have to tell her sooner or later. "If I tell you what will I get in return?" I brought myself closer to her and let my breath fan across her face.

Oblivious she asked, "Well, what do you want?" I thought I would give her a little hint. I ran my hand from her foot to her knee then moved her hand out of the way ready to go for her upper leg. Finally getting it, she went rigid and fear rose in her eyes. Instantly I stopped. How could I, after everything that happen, try to fuck her at a time like this?

"Sorry" I spoke with my head down.

"How about I let you pick out a movie for us to watch." She said sounding desperate to change the subject. I just nodded my head still crouched beside her.

"So... are you going to give me the down low on why you don't want me to see your family?" She asked.

"They are just backstabbing pricks that will do anything in the name of tradition." I hoped she would let it go. Talking about my family is really one thing I hate.

"So... witch one of your family members should a look out for?" I glanced at her before I stood and walked over to the sofa. She looking genuinely worried.

"Don't worry they are all bad." I chuckled.

"How can you laugh at a time like this? I have to meet them for the first time. And as if it is not hard enough to meet a King and Queen, add the fact that I am representing my father's kingdom." Was she really that worried? I felt bad that I was pressing her buttons but I am not about to tell her my life's story.

"Well fuck Missy, what do you want me to say?" I spoke blankly.

"I just want you to give me some tips or something. You know, like so that maybe I could give a good first impression. It's not like I want you to give me your life's story because I sure as hell would not give you mine." She copied my blank tone. I could not help but to, again, feel bad about saying something about her family. I mean I already knew she grew up without a father.

I patted the spot next to me. Her eyes brightened in shock. I nodded my head, and she stood to come over to me. Again I got lost in the way her body moved in just the few steps it took her to get over to me. This time instead of hugging her legs she folded one under her and wrapped her other over the foot that was under her. "Well, go on." She smiled happy she had won.

"My mother, Beatrice Delamater, is very traditional. Well, all of my family is, other than me of course. She has never really liked your father. She simply puts up with him because of the ties the two kingdoms have. She will most likely not like you because you were raised in America and you have a mind of your own. When you're around her try the keep it professional. Use Miss Delamater or Ma'am and never call her by her first name. Only the King can call her Beatrice." I looked over at her. She had her lower lip between her teeth. Not being able to stop myself I remembered what it was like to have her lips on my skin and shivered involuntarily. She never said anything so I continued.

"My father, Christopher Delamater, again he is very traditional. And pretty much the same thing goes. Call him Sir and so on. Him and I... we don't really get along, so he may take some of it out on you. Please don't take it personal." All she did was nod. I could tell she was getting worried but I continued.

"Then we have my older adopted brother, and heir to the throne. His name is Garland. He is very... spiteful and again I don't get along with him. And being as he is heir, I would stick to calling him Sir. Just to be safe stay away from him when you are alone. He... is somewhat forceful and touchy." She started to giggle. "What?"

"Well he is somewhat like is brother then..." She giggled again, "I am sorry go on." Then I got it and could not help but smile. I was warning her about Garland when she took me down a time or two.

"Yeah, I guess I should warn him." I chuckled thinking about the time she took me out in the dining room. "Anyways, Then you have my little sister, Sydney. She is six, and is great. She is one of the sweetest kids you will ever meet. I know you two will

get along great. I am just worried she will turn into one of the clones- my family." She grinned at that.

"Is that all?" She asked. "Is there not one person you are happy to see? I mean, besides your sister? Not one person that would make this visit... worth it?" Was she really asking about me? I mean why did she even care if it was 'worth it'.

I shrugged, "Well, to tell you the truth I can't wait to see Fletcher Pomeroy. He works for the royal family, and is one of the only friends I have in Luxembourg. You will like him and not need worry about him liking you. He will, as beautiful and," my eyes flicked to her breasts, "blessed as you are he won't be able to not like you." I smirked.

She blushed and hit my shoulder playfully. She looked so cute just like my sister, Sydney. "Just put in the movie, Eric."

Getting up, I put in 'Star Trek'. I never did like 'Star Trek' but the new movie was not so bad. Plus, I wanted to make Missy miserable.

Not even ten minutes in Missy spoke, "Can I ask you something?" I went rigid. What could she possibly want to ask? I told her everything that she needs to know about my family. "Oh, don't be a baby. I am not going to ask you about why you hate your family. I know what it's like so I won't ask." She had my curiosity running-What was her home life like?

"Okay then, what would you like to know?" I said trying to act like the movie was consuming my attention.

"Is your mother, I mean Mrs. Delamater, British?"

"Um... Yes. How did you know and why do you ask?" I was puzzled.

"Well, I noticed the very first time I meet you that you had a British-French accent. And then when you said your mother's name was Beatrice I put two and two together." She said as if everyone would pick up on it.

"Oh," was all I could say. After that we lapsed into silence.

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OK, so that was the jet ride. Next chapter is meeting the parents/family/friends.

Hoped you liked some more Eric-Missy time.

And like always VOTE, COMMENT, FAN and TELL a friend. Please and Thanks!

P.S. OMG I almost have 30s and that means that I am only like 20 people away from making my fan goal! I know it does not sound like a lot but it means the world to me! Thank you, thank you, THANK YOU!

Chapter 26

The Art of Hope (26)

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Chapter 26

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Eric's POV

The jet was about to land and I was about to enter hell. The last three hours were spent listening to Missy's soft breathing. I swear that girl can sleep. She had sleep to spare and I had to admit it pissed me off a little.

"Are we almost there?" She asked in a groggy voice.

"Yeah, about twenty minutes. So you may want to go wipe the sleep off your eyes." I smirked.

"Ha Ha, very funny." Standing anyways, she sashayed her hips as she walked to the onboard bathroom and my mouth began to water. It took a lot to sit still and not push her up against the wall.

"And don't take forever. I would like you use it to." I added before she closed the door.

About five minutes later she came out. Now looking refreshed, her curly hair was in a twist to the side of her neck. The sleepy dazed look had left her green eyes, but not the look of worry and emptiness. I wondered how long it would take her to get over Jace. It looked like he had done more damage than I had first thought.

"What?" Her voice was sharp and irritable. Mood swing much?

"Um... nothing. That was fast." And I quickly shuffled past her and into the bathroom.

When I was done in the bathroom, I walked out to find Missy rocking herself back and forth. "What do I

do if they don't like me? I mean I am representing a country now. Not just myself. I have no clue what I am doing." She rambled on and on. Worry laced her forehead and her hands began to tremble.

I walked over and took the space next to her. I reached for her hand, but she pulled it away. "Missy, this is in your blood. You can do this. I know it." Truth was I did not know if she could do it. She was not trained to do this like I was. She did not seem to be comforted by my words so I continued. "Just think of it like... meeting my parents. You know like it's done in movies." I had to say, it was a good idea.

She looked at me and for a split second I thought she was going to start yelling at me, so I cringed away. Then before I knew it she was laughing. Not a full blown laugh - her heart would not allow that.

"What?" I asked truly baffled at her mood swings. I guess it was her time of the month.

"Like I would even date you. Pft, you wish. The only relationship we have is you trying to seduce me into your pants." She chuckle. She did have a point.

"Yeah, yeah. That's funny blah, blah, blah." If she knew how much I wanted to get in her pants she would not be joking.

"I wonder," her voice suddenly turned serious gaining my attention, "Could we have been friends if we had never meet that night?" I had never thought of our 'relationship' that way.

"Who knows? I am thinking probably not. You're just too hot to pass up." I joked; truth was she WAS too hot to pass up. She blushed and turned away.

"Don't you know we hardly ever have a conversation without you hitting on me? It has not worked yet, and it probably never will." She said with her head still turned to the window.

The flight attendant came in then, "If you will buckle up, the jet is about to land." With that she left.

Missy buckled in her set and I buckled in the next to her. The nerves hit her again and her leg began to bounce up and down. Not thinking I placed my hand on it. Our eyes meet and for the first time I saw vulnerability in them. Sure I had seen hurt, anger,

joy, happiness, and even emptiness, but never vulnerability. Giving a small smile that did not reach her eyes, she brushed my hand off.

"They're just people," I muttered.

"The Delamater's are almost ready for dinner. They want you to meet them in the dining room. If you would follow me I will show you to your rooms."

We followed him up the elegantly decorated stars and to the east wing. He opened Missy's door and placed her bags on the floor before he lead me to the room straight across from hers.

I dressed in a light blue button down shirt, black dress pants, and polished black shoes. I knew how mother got about dinner. 'Dinner is a formal meal.' She would always say. I was fixing my tie when a knock came from the door.

There she was in her bath robe. For real? I mean, does she do this to tease me? "What?" I grumbled a little upset.

"Um, never mind. I was just seeing if this was formal," I realized her eyes were not on my face but

on my biceps and I had to smile. "But, I see you and now I know." With that she turned and padded back to her room.

I banged on her door, "Missy, hurry up. It's time for dinner and my mother hates late people." I yelled for the hundredth time.

"I am coming. I'm coming." She screamed as she opened the door. Her hair was in a bun to the side of her head and no makeup on. A navy blue button up ruffle shirt was paired with a black pencil skirt that hugged right under her breasts. I was pretty sure I licked my lips, but at that moment I was not aware of anything but her perfection in front of me. "I thought we were going to be late."

"Yeah," I shook my head, "follow me."

"Give me a second." She whispered in front of the dining room door.

"We have been standing here for four minutes. It's now, or never." She glared at me but nodded her head.

I slowly opened the door to see my family standing around the drink table.

"It's about time the two of you showed up." My mother's voice came. I placed my hand on the back of Missy's elbow and pulled her forward.

Ignoring my mother I began with the introductions. "Missy, this is my mother, Beatrice Delamater."

Missy gracefully glided to my mother, gave a nice head bob, and held out her hand preparing to talk.

"Eric, did you bring home another skank? I thought Mary Elizabeth was coming." My mother's crud British voice came. She was ignoring Missy's out stretched hand.

Before I said anything, I glanced at Missy's appalled face. Quickly gathering her composer she said, "He only wishes, Ma'am. And I am Mary Elizabeth. It's is so nice to finally meet you."

Padding over to Missy, I took her hand; it was soft, small, and was a perfect fit to mine. She clung to it for dear life. I could feel the tension in her body just from the way she clutched my hand. I guided her to

my father. "Father this is Mary Elizabeth. Mary this is my father, Christopher."

She held out her the hand that was not clutching to mine while giving another head bob, "Hello, Sir. You have a wonderful place here." It amazed me how she was holding together. She really was a natural.

"It is great to meet you. Your father has told me so many wonderful things." I pulled her away before his 'true colors' could show, and to my little sister who was running toward us. I dropped Missy's hand to grab my sister up into a bear hug. I planted a kiss on her forehead.

"And this is my sister, Sydney." Missy's eyes brightened and a glow came to her face. I shook my head when I found myself wondering if she would look like this when she had children of her own.

"Well Hi, Sydney. Your brother here," she placed he hand on my shoulder "has told me so much about you."

"This is my friend Mary Elizabeth." I smiled down at my black haired, brown eyed sister. Her sweet little round face and pink lips always softened my heart.

"But you can call me Missy," she chimed in.

"Missy is it?" Another deep crud voice cut in. "Well, it is very nice to meet you." Garland said as he gave Missy a once over. I felt her shiver with disgust. Well, what I hoped was disgust.

"Mary Elizabeth," she corrected him "You must be Garland." Missy said in a cold voice, and I could not help but smirk.

"Ma'am, Sir, Dinner is served." A short girl said with a black outfit and white apron on. I was pleased that my father still used the good looking maids. I now knew what I was doing for the night.

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What do you think of the family? Eric? Garland? Like the names? And all that good stuff!!!

Hope you enjoyed and OMG I have Like 190 votes!!!! I am over halfway to my goal. I want to say thank you.

I never even thought this many people would enjoy reading my dinky old story. THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!

Anyways, VOTE, COMMENT, FAN! Please and Thanks!

I'm off to write the next chapter...

Chapter 27

The Art of Hope (27)

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Chapter 27

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To understand most of the Chapter you must understand how to play Jenga. Here is the link:

http://www.centralconnector.com/GAMES/jenga.html

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unwelcome. All I wanted to do was run to my room and cry like a 15 year old girl who had her heart broken.

I felt everything building up - Jace, me becoming queen, and this family. Just every little moment building up like a game of Jenga just waiting for the right block to be pulled causing it all to come crashing down. My breath began to quicken. I was trying not to break and I had been succeeding for so long. But, truth was, I did not think I was going to hold out any longer. I found myself wishing I was home and that Annie was here to fix me, because me trying to work things out was clearly not working.

"I am so sorry, Missy. I tried to warn you. If you want to go, we can. I would totally understand." He spoke sincerely. I was glad he was not trying to seduce me at the moment, because I would not be able to take it.

I shook my head, "No, no, I am fine. Leaving will only let them win. I can do this, promise." A gave him a small smile.

"Yes, but my mother and brother had no right to say or do those things." His words took me back to the memories made just minutes ago.

"So, you are planning on running Tesoro di Gioiello, I guess. Do you really think you can handle it?" Beatrice had asked her grey hair pulled back into a tight bun, her dark hollow grey eyes piercing through my skin and into my soul.

"Well, Ma'am. I am going to try my very best. Yes, I may not have learned it from birth but I will have help along the way." She was testing me the whole time and I was not going to let her win.

"Raised in America could have only corrupted you. For all I know, you could be sleeping with the guards." My mouth a dropped open at that statement and my first guess is that she had spies in the castle. But, no matter how I tried I could not think of something say. She had hit the hammer on the nail and I would not lie. I closed my eyes to gather my thoughts but Jace's face appeared behind my eyelids.

"Mother, did you re-decorate?" Eric's voice had saved me from her.

Coming back to the present I looked at Eric. "Thanks, for saving me back there. I was drowning."

"It was nothing. And what exactly did Garland do to you?" He raised a brow.

I had the joy of being seated between Garland and Eric. Eric would take my hand in his large lightly callused one and give it a reassuring squeeze whenever the Queen would press me on something. And I needed the comfort, I had not pulled away. I hated myself for having to lean on Eric, but I could not have done it without him. Garland, on the other hand would reach over and try to slide his girlishly thin hand between my legs. I pinched him two or three times but the boy would not get the hint. He got a good feel of me once because one hand was in Eric's and the other held a wine glass. I jumped and shuffled closer to Eric, nearly vomiting right at the table. Luckily know one was looking.

"Missy," Eric said authority ringing throughout the hall, "What did he do?" I turned red and felt another Jena block being taken from my unstable base and

placed on top. The stress was going to break me, I just knew it.

"He touched you didn't he." Eric said through clenched teeth. I could not help but giggle. Here is a guy who has touched me inappropriately so many times and he is pissed because his step brother wanted a fill to. "Oh, so you think it's funny?"

My laughter stopped and anger quickly replaced it. "Like you have any room to talk. You have filled me up so many times without my consent." I spat at him. He was instantly sorry, I could tell because his silver-grey eyes turned a dull grey color.

"I have been thinking about that, you know." Looking down like he was embarrassed, "I'm sorry." He mumbled so low I almost did not hear it. Was he for real saying sorry? "Now, I will be right back I have to go speak to Garland." He began to walk away with me still standing there dumbfounded.

I let him get halfway down the hall before my brain kicked in. "Eric?" I yelled and he quickly turned to me. "I just want you to know that, I forgive you." He smiled at me and at that moment I realized that he

had never truly smiled at me before. This was his actual smile, one side just not a wide as the other, most of his teeth showing, and a small dimple on the left side. It was a smile that could turn the ugliest of men into a chick magnet.

I decided that I needed some me time, sometime to just leave this world and go to my happy place. So, being a huge bubble bath fan, I went into my bathroom only to remember that there was no bathtub - Just a standing shower. Upset with this news I just changed into cotton pajama shorts and tank outfit and sat on my bed. It was only 7:08, so sleep was out of the question.

My mind wondered and many times landing on one person - Jace. I was still kind of in shock. Jace cheating was like Wiley coyote catching the Roadrunner. My heart gave another pulse of pain and I held back the tears, again. He was just a guy, just some guy that got bored and tiered so he found a new toy. I tried to convince myself. And Emily, I knew I should feel sorry for her. I mean, she did lose her virginity to a cheating guy. That had to hurt, but all I

could feel toward her was hate. Hate for stilling my man.

A light rap came from the door. Slowly I padded over to the door. It took so much because I felt like I was holding the world on my shoulders. Opening the door, there stood little old Sydney in her light pink night dress and a book in her hand.

"Do you know where Eric went? He promised he would read to me and I can't find him." She said. Sydney was peeping in my room. I guess she thought he would be in here.

"I am not sure where he went." I lied not wanting her to be in the middle of some family feud. "Would you like for me to read to you. I promise Eric will be here tomorrow to read to you, and if he doesn't you come find me and I'll bet him up for you." Her big brown eyes glistened at that as she brushed her dark hair out of the way.

"Really?" I just nodded. I needed to get my mind off of things, anyways. She gave a small jump and clap at my nod and tucked her hair behind her ear again.

"Would you like me to braid your hair first?" I asked. I did not think twice about asking. I would braid Katie's every night.

"Sure." She smiled and plopped on my bed as I got a brush and hair tie from the bathroom.

Sitting with her in-between my legs brushing her hair she hummed a light tune. I felt blissfully happy until I thought about wanting kids of my own witch lead to that dream I had of Jace and I.

"Okay," Sydney dragged out the word as I finished tying up her hair. "Read, Read, Read!"

"Okay, Okay," I chuckled. "Sit down and I will read." I smiled at her happiness.

With that I began reading 'Where the Wild Things Are'. When the book was finished Sydney was fast asleep and cuddled to my side. I stroked her stay hair and thought about how it was funny that a six year old could make you feel whole. Even just for a second.

Three light taps came from the door along with, "Missy? Are you awake?" It was Eric.

"Yeah, Come on in." I whisper yelled.

As soon as Eric's eyes landed on Sydney his face went aglow causing me to smile. Maybe the boy could love.

"You know, it's pretty bad that you stood up your own sister." I joked with him as he took over stroking her hair.

"I know it was, but I had some... things I had to take care of. What did she keep you from anyway?" His eyes never left his sleeping sister.

"Well, I was going to take a bath but all I have is a shower, so she did not bother me at all. I kinda like the little bugger."

He slipped his arms under her a lifted her with ease. "I should get her in bed. And I have a tub in my bathroom if you would like to use it. I don't mind."

"Really?" I really needed to relax some.

"Sure, Sure. Fletcher is going to stop by and play some Wii, but you can lock the bathroom door." He said shrugging his shoulders causing Sydney to shift.

"Thank you so much. You won't even know I am there." I went to grab a towel and a change of underwear. When I turned he was gone so I just padded to his bathroom.

Cold cream tiles welcomed my feet and burgundy walls gave the room a soft warm feeling. Shuffling through the cabinets until I found some non-scented bubble bath, I already began to unwind. It was not lavender but it would do.

One foot at a time I slowly lowered myself into the steamy hot bath. All my muscles relaxed and let my worries float away. My eyes closed and I sank off into emptiness.

Banging on the door, pulled me from my sleep. "Missy? MISSY? Are you all right? You have been in there for an hour and a half." Eric frantic shouts came from the door followed by more banging.

"I'm fine a just fell asleep. Give me a minute and I'll be right out." I answer then realized the water had grown chilly.

Drying myself off, I winced discovering that my breasts were tender again. Baring the pain I put on my cami and cotton shorts, craving some sherbet ice cream. My hair still wet I opened the door. "See, I am alive."

"Good, we were wondering if you wanted to bowl." A short dark haired guy asked. I cocked my head to the side. Did I miss something?

"This is Fletcher. Fletcher, this is Missy." Eric introduced us.

I held out my hand for my introduction, not really feeling like talking. He took it and gave a kiss to each knuckle. I giggled like a little girl.

"Nice to meet you." I turned to Eric, "Do you think that the kitchen might have some sherbet ice cream? I really want some." I licked my lips. I could taste it already.

"That does sound good." Fletcher chimed.

"Okay, we'll go look." Eric shook his head with that rare smile on his face.

I began to skip down the hall after them, but the pain in my chest caused me to stop. Trying to get my mind of the pain I thought I would get to know Fletcher. "So, How long have you know Eric?"

"Oh, about all his life. My mother worked here so we played with one another for years." Jealousy engulfed me for a moment - I had always wanted a lifelong friend but I had only known Annie for 5 years now. I quickly smiled to cover it up. "How about you?"

"What?" I questioned not really knowing what he was asking.

"Who long have you and Eric been 'friends'?" He sounded skeptical.

"Friends... well, it's been about three hours now." Glancing at Eric I saw him smirk. "But, I have known him a few months, if that's what you're asking." I ended answering Fletcher's question.

"He sure is lucky to have a friend as lovely as you." At first I was not sure how to take it. After dinner with Garland I would have loved to never be hit on again.

Again, trying to cover my feelings I smile and said a soft 'Why, thank you.' And we lapsed into silence.

"Wow Missy, you really did want some sherbet." Eric said as he scooped me my third bowl of ice cream.

"I know, I know, you don't have to make me feel like a cow." Fletcher snickered and Eric handed me my bowl.

"Can we take this one to go? I really want to kick some ass in bowling." Fletcher asked looking like an eight year old that had ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder).

"Sure, Sure." I said eating on my way back to Eric's room. I was ready to kick some butt myself.

Five hours later the two were still going at it while I lay on Eric's bed and watched. I had to say, the two of them did act like brothers - hitting and cursing at one another. I had actually laughed a time or two. I rolled of my side and onto my back - the pain in my breasts stopped my form lying on my stomach. I never realized that Eric never 'let go', that he always had his 'work clothes' on so to speak. I could not lie; the

boy would make a good king. I glanced at him again. That smile still in place, maybe we could be friends - Lord knows I need one right now.

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Yes, I got another chapter out. I am so on a roll. So..... What did you think? Eric? Fletcher? Sydney? Garland? Queen? Hahahah I have to say I loved this chapter. It has nothing special in it, but it is just so... I don't know the words. Well, hope you enjoyed.

Like always.

VOTE, COMMENT, FAN, maybe tell a FRIEND?.... Please and thanks.

Chapter 28

The Art of Hope (28)

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Chapter 28

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I was hot and was about to break a sweat. I felt warmth coming from every side of my body. I tried to get up but something had me locked in place. Opening my sleep-filled eyes I realized I had fallen asleep in Eric's room. My bladder suddenly screamed at me to run. I had to go. Rollin over I found myself smashed up again Fletcher - who was out cold. I let out a little shriek and rolled to the other side only to be stopped by Eric's body. I had no time to think

about what our sleeping arrangement would look like to an outsider, I HAD to go. I tried to sit myself up but Eric's strong arm had me pinned down to the bed. Not caring if I woke him I slung it off, stood on the bed and stepped over him. Running to the bathroom, I found myself crossing my legs so that I would not dribble on myself. As soon as my ass hit the toilet I let it go and took in a big sigh of relief. Funny how good it feels to pee when you have to so go bad.

I heard a groan come from the open bathroom door. "God Missy, I was asleep!" Eric's groggy voice came.

"I had to pee." I whined, "And you had me trapped between the two of you." I scolded, still reliving myself.

"Well, hurry or I will have to piss in the tub." Fletcher grunted as he walked in the bathroom.

"Get OUT!" I pointed to the door while still sitting on the toilet clenching my legs together and pulling my skimpy camisole over myself. "Just let me finish up here."

"I have to go, NOW!" He turned away from me and literally pissed in the shower, gross. Eric strode in next and I closed my legs even tighter.

"Come to think of it, I need to piss to." He turned and I quickly pulled my pants up, flushed the toilet, and washed my hands trying to get out of there as fast as possible. I heard the two laugh.

"What never seen a guys penis before?" Fletcher's voice came. "And to think, I thought you 'got around'." I knew he did not mean it in a bad way but I could not help but thing of Jace. And my spirits that had been fixed with last night's events came crashing down. Let's add another Jenga block to Missy's tower of stress, I thought. I felt a steady throb at the back of my head. Great now I am getting a headache.

I thought I heard Eric whisper something and then Fletcher say 'Sorry man, how was I supposed to know?' I ignored it.

"I think I am going to go take a shower, guys. I guess I will see you at breakfast?" Eric came out with a regretful face.

"Um, Missy. About breakfast... My father wants a private breakfast with you this morning. I have no clue what it's over. But, if you don't want to I will go with you, even if he does not like that fact." So much for 'be with you the whole time', I thought.

"No, no, that's just fine. He did not seem too bad yesterday. I think I can handle it." I said as a rubbed my forehead and closed my eyes, the ache was growing.

"You okay?" I felt a warm hand brush against my hair and I pulled away.

"Yeah, yeah, I just have a headache. I may be coming down with something, but I will be fine." Looking in his silver-grey eyes, I grinned. "Now, you run along. I saw you eyeing that waitress at dinner, and I kept you from a night of fun. Go, shoo, find her." I joked. I once found it gross and juvenile that he would sleep around, but now I envied him. If I could sleep around like that maybe I would not be all sulky over Jace - still the name made me clutch at my chest.

"You didn't really keep me from her. I was ditching her for Fletcher. Beside," shrugging he continued, "she is not really my type."

"Really," I crossed my arms, "then what IS your type?" Her bosoms had to be a double D and her waist was just as small as mine. Long brown hair framed a pretty round face supported by sky blue eyes - almost the same shade sky blue eyes that I love. She seemed to be Eric's type to me.

"Well, actually Missy," Fletcher's voice came, "Girls like you."

"Fletch," I heard Eric scold. A very faint color pink lit Eric's lightly tanned face.

"It's okay Fletch, I already knew that. In fact the very first time I encountered him, I knew." He did pick me out of all the other girls there.

"Missy, my father will meet you in the garden in an hour. I suggest you fix your hair." Way to change the subject Eric, I thought.

"What you don't like my hair?" I gave a puppy dog face and widened my eyes. Eric's was instantly in front of me.

His tall frame leaned down bringing his lips to my ear. "I, babe, did not say I did not like it. In fact, it reminds me of the first night I laid eyes on you." He whispered softly into my ear. Instantly the memories came flooding back and I drew in a heavy breath. "That's what a thought," he whispered as he walked off with Fletcher hot on his heels.

Stepping out of the shower, I grabbed my dark purple sweater dress. Pairing it with black leggings and a large black belt, I left my room for the dreadful talk to King Delamater.

My headache was slowly turning into an annoying throb as I turned into the garden. And what do you know, its inside. Yes, it was not a garden at all, it was a greenhouse. It's was a large octagon, with a patio surrounded by flowers and such. I, never really being a flower kind of girl, did not pay it much attention.

A scrawny older man with dark black hair with flakes of grey sat at a two person table. I recognized his short frame as soon as my eye's rested apron him - The King.

"Ah, Mary Elizabeth." He held out a hand. I gave a nod while taking it. He planted a kiss on one knuckle and motioned for me to sit across from him.

"Good Morning, Sir."

"I hope you slept well, Mary Elizabeth." I almost laughed, if he only knew.

"Yes Sir, I did. I hope the same with you." I was waiting for him to get to the point.

"How is your father?" The King asked. I was getting agitated, never being one to dance around the subject.

"He is doing well, Sir. I don't mean to be rude but is there something you wanted to speak to be about?" I asked hopping that I did not give the wrong impression.

"Yes, yes, very sorry. You much like you father in that aspect." He smirked.

"Well..."

"I have noticed you and my son are good friends, am I right?" Where was he going with this?

"Good friends? If that is what you call it." I said still wondering where this was going.

"Well, I want you to know you have my blessing, and that I think that Eric and you will be great rulers together." WHAT? NO, No, No, he thought... NO.

"Sir, with all due respect, your son and I are NOT together, and will NEVER be together." I stood and bowed, "If you will excuse me." With that I marched out of the garden without breakfast.

Shaking my head I padded down the hall. How could he think that? Eric and I don't even talk; we don't act like a couple. Just the thought made me giggle.

Walking down the hall I heard footsteps behind me. Glancing back I saw Garland. I stopped in my tack as I noticed he had two black eyes. Eric. I smiled; the

black around his eyes really enhanced his looks, I thought.

"You think this," pointed to his eyes he continued, "is funny?" he spat. His cologne wafted up my nose that instant and the smell made my head spin. I covered my mouth when I got the feeling I was going to vomit, and ran.

"Mary, I am not done with you!" Garland screamed but I ran. I was going to be sick.

Knees bent sitting on the floor, I threw up last night's supper and ice cream. That's when it hit me...

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Somewhat of a cliffy... Good news is I am freezing rained in. ICE IS EVERYWHERE!!!! So if I can get my computer away from my family I will be writing soon.

Thanks to all my new fans! I am almost to my goal(s)!

Vote, comment, fan.... Tell a friend???? Please and thanks!

Chapter 29

The Art of Hope (29)

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Chapter 29

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Okay Guys, this one has a video. I would greatly appreciate it if you listened to when reading this Chapter. It would not have been written if it was not for this song.

About to ramble so if you don't want to read skip it ;)....

So I am in love with Coldplay... There songs are soooo freaking deep. So unlike so many songs out there.

Their songs have meaning and sometimes bring me to tears (literally). Not only do the words say so much but the keys they use and the chords that pick change the songs into a whole different level. *sigh*

Sorry about that. I little of my music geek coming out in me ;) read on my lovelies....

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it in my ears as I pressed the palms of my hands to my head in an effort to push away the pain.

I had no more pride, faith, and I had even lost hope. The tears I had been holding back for so long had found revenge on me - falling they stained my face. I gripped my fists turning the tips of my fingers white.

I clutched at the tiles of the floor desperate to pull myself from the imposing darkness. My hiccups stopped air from reaching my lungs. So, I held my breath and contemplated even taking in another. I felt the blissful feeling of wanting air. That want drowned out every pain my heart had ever felt..

Eventually I drew in and the pain came back tenfold as air flooded my lungs. My hands ran to my head again and pulled at my hair, as my eyes clenched and the taste of saltwater ran into my mouth.

"Missy?" a soft high pitched voice came. I did not turn to look, truthfully I did not care. My soul had no more room for carless things of that sort.

"Missy?" it came again. My fists tightened in my hair. Unaware I began to rock myself back and forth on

the tiled floor. Realizing the whole was in my chest and not in my head I hugged my knees and violently rock myself as tears still streamed down my face. I was only a little aware that my teeth were digging into the skin of my arm.

"Missy? Fuck, Missy? What happened?" This time I knew it was Eric that was calling my name, but still I could not move. I had no need to. There was nothing out there for me - not anymore. Jace had cheated, and his child was inside me.

Strong arms pulled me to a masculine body. I fought against him - punching weakly at his chest. I did not want Eric. I wanted Jace. No, I NEEDED Jace. I cried harder at the name - if that was possible. Still I wiggled away from Eric as he spoke words that I could not comprehend. Easily he seized my hands and pulled me into him.

Feeling a comfort of someone else holding me together I tucked my arms under his and around his back. My nails dug into his skin, but he never said a word.

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Eric's POV

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"If you go get Missy, You, Fletch, Missy, and I will all watch 'Pirates of the Caribbean'." I cooed to Sydney. I could not believe how well she and Missy hit it off. Missy was the most used word out of Sydney's mouth all day. I would have to remember to thank Missy.

"Kay," She bounced away to Missy's room.

"So what did Garland say? I saw his face. Man, you did a number to him." Fletcher shook his head. "And all that over a girl? She's hot, don't get me wrong, but she is just a girl."

"If you knew half of her story you would not think so." I stated matter-of-factly.

"Man, you have gone soft." I looked down the hall for Sydney and Missy finding nothing.

"Well, I saw firsthand what being a player can do to a woman." It's true; this whole ordeal with Missy has opened my eyes.

"How long has it been since you have had some pussy?" Just like him to blame it on lack of sex.

I chuckled. "A while." He looked up at me shocked. I was never one to go without pussy for any amount of time.

"How long?" He asked sternly, like a father scolding his son.

"Months." That all he really needed to know. I glanced down the hall and still no sign of the girls.

"MONTHS?"

I was going to answer his question when Sydney ran to us with an apprehensive look on her face while yelling my name.

I immediately squatted down to her level, "What? What is wrong, Sid?" I asked running my hand along the side of her head. I sure did miss the little brat.

"Missy's crying on the bathroom floor." Without hearing more I was halfway down the hall.

"You guys go ahead. I'll see what's wrong." I yelled behind me. If my father did anything to her, he will

be in the same shape as Garland. I was not bringing Missy home in an emotional wreck for the King to see.

Running in her room I hear sobs coming from the bathroom. "Missy?" When I saw her rocking herself back and forth, her teeth sinking into her skin, her arms around her I knew something was terribly wrong. "Missy? Fuck, Missy? What happened?" She made no move that she heard me - just continued rocking and weeping.

I was down on the floor with her, pulling her into a bear hug. He weakly punched at me, but no power was behind it. I gently moved her hands out of the way and held her closer. "It's okay. Everything is going to be fine." I repeated over and over as she gave into me and dug her nails into the skin of my back.

We sat there - her small frame engulfed by my larger more masculine one - rocking back and forth. I did not ask what was wrong. I did not know what had happened. All I knew is that she was broken, torn,

and frayed around the edges. And I, being the only one there, had to fix her.

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Sad? I know.... Did you like the song??? Did it go? How did this make you feel? lol Any reactions I should know about....

Anyways, Vote, Comment, tell a friend????? Please and thanks...

OH, AND TELL ME YOU LOVE ME!!!! I have uploaded two times in one day!!!! Truth is I am iced in and have nothing better to do.....

Chapter 30

The Art of Hope (30)

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Chapter 30

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Chapter 30!!!!! OMG, we have come so far. I remember the days that Missy and Jace were lovers and would kiss and hug. Trust me Jace fans (or now Eric fans). You will know what went on in his sexy little head. Promise. You're just going to have wait.

Here you go Chapter 30

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Eric's P.O.V.

I was not sure how long we sat there in the floor, but her sobs had turned into hiccups and sniffles. The grip she had on me had loosened and her muscles were now relaxed leaving her head rested on my chest. My fingers ran soft circles on her back comfortingly. I still did not know what had brought this mental breakdown on. Curiosity was killing me, but I knew now was not the time. And my shirt was already stained with her tears, I did not know if I could take anymore of her sobs.

"Would you like to go to bed?" I asked in a soft low voice, afraid that the slightest noise would cause her to lose control again. She did not move, nor did she speak. We had to have been here for an hour. And I knew that her muscles must be screaming to relax, I know mine were. "I am going to put you in the bed, and then go see what Sid, and Fletch are up too. But I will be back to check on you." I cooed in her ear slightly rocking her.

I slowly got up with her in my arms. She still did not make a move or speak a word. I was slightly worried. This kind of behavior was not like Missy. As I walked

her out of the bathroom she did wrap her arms around my neck in an effort to not fall out of my grasp. Not that she would, she did not weigh a thing.

I gently laid her in the kings sized bed. She limply fell on it and her empty, red, puffy eyes just stared ahead of her. I began to take her belt off so that maybe she would be a little more comfortable. My hands barley touched the fabric of her dress, but it was enough for my body to want more. Quickly I slid it off and tossed it on the tan carpet and removed her shoes. Before closing the door I took one last look at her. Still she had not moved. Something was very wrong; I pegged it down to my father. He was the last one that saw here.

I clattered down the hall not caring if I may have been stomping. I had told the King that nothing would happen to Missy, and I was never one to let down the King. He took me in when my own family betrayed me.

I busted threw father's office door. He sat at his chair behind a large oak desk, his ashy dark hair and smaller almost feminine frame in a waiting position -

he knew I was coming. The sight brought back memories of the day he turned my world around, but this was not the time or place to think about that.

"Father," I said through clenched teeth, "What did you do to her?" My voice was hoarse because of my anger.

"Son," he stretched out his hand to the chair in front of him, "why don't you sit down. We could share some Scotch."

"Cut the crap, Father. What did you and Missy discuses over breakfast?" I spat my voice growing loader.

"I know you still hate me, Eric. But you have to believe I did not mean to cross the line." My father put his hands up in surrender.

"What DID you do?" I growled.

"I got the wrong impression of you two at dinner. I thought that maybe you had found someone. Maybe someone that you could love and I thought it was her." I almost wanted to laugh. I can't believe he thought Missy and I could 'love' one another. "I called

her to the garden to say that I approve. She is a very well mannered woman, Eric. Even if she is from the states. I have never seen a girl take that much from your mother, and still walk away. Walk away without punching her or crying, that is."

A genuine smile spread across my face. "Yes, she is tough. That is for sure, but I don't think I could love her. How is mother taking her... unsuccessfulness to make her cry, anyways?" I chuckled.

"Not, so well. She was angry that I would give Mary Elizabeth and you my blessing, but I would even if the relationship is not going anywhere. Tell William Ventura (The King) that I approve. Mary is going to make a wonderful ruler. She has the gumption for it." He smiled a proud smile and the jealousy grew to near breaking point.

"So father, what have I done wrong to not have the 'gumption' to run a country?" I clenched my fists as a heat wave ran down my spine.

"This has nothing to do with that, Eric." He stated.

"Yes well, you never told me what caused you to pick Garland over me. I think that I should have a right to know, seeing as I was in line for the throne." I screamed.

"You were not old enough, Eric. You know that." He said calmly like it was some kind of fact.

"As far as I can tell, father, you are still king and I am now twenty-five. I had plenty of time to age, and Garland is only two years older than I." Anger only grew when my father sat there calmly.

"We adopted him Eric. He is part of the family, given him right to the throne."

"Father," my voice now dangerously calm. "Would you like to know why I can't love Missy?" I asked. He just nodded his head as curiosity shinned within is eyes.

"I can't love because the family I once loved stabbed me in the back. You took away the one thing in this world I worked for and gave it to a pervert name Garland. I can't allow myself to love; it only blinds you for the truth." Well, that was not entirely true. I

did love Sydney, but children are different. "Oh, and Mary Elizabeth is not feeling well. I don't think she will be attending dinner."

My father's face turned to shock, and I walked out of the office. Needing something to distract myself I set off to find Sydney and Fletcher.

They were playing 'MarioKart'. Instantly Sid paused the game and ran to me. Like always I grabbed her up and swung her into my arms. "Man, I think you are getting to old for this." She had grown and although she was not heavy for me her feet almost touched the grounded when I swung her.

"I am only six, Eric." I just planted a wet one on her forehead. "Is Missy all right?" She asked as she wrapped her arms around my neck.

I was not sure what to tell her. She was only six, but she had seen her crying on the floor. Plus, I really did not have a clue what was wrong with her. "Well, she is just not feeling well." I said while putting her down.

"Can I go see her?" I smiled at my kind sister. She cared for Missy and she did not even know her. Well, Missy was great with kids, so I guess it should not be surprise me.

"Maybe later, let's give her some time. Sound good?"

"Okay," Was all she said, but I could tell she was thinking hard.

"Good, now start me in on Mario." I commanded in a joking voice.

Four hours and ten video games later we had our feel and it was time for dinner. Sydney had gone to get dressed and Fletcher had to go do his work.

Dressed in a similar outfit as yesterday I padded to Missy's room to check on her. I knocked on the door, but she did not answer. Remembering her previous state I let myself in. She had shifted, now her head face at the window as she lay on her side.

"Missy," I called softly. She did not move so I tiptoed to her bed and placed a soft hand on her shoulder. "Missy," I called again. Still she did nothing. That's

when I moved to the other side of the bed so that I could see her face.

Her eyes were still open and stared blankly at the window. I gently shook her shoulder. "Missy, Did you want to go to dinner? I already told my father you did not feel well, but if you want to they won't mind." She glanced up at me then back at the window saying nothing.

"Missy, you need to eat. I don't want you getting sick." The King put her in my care and look at how she was doing.

Still she said nothing. "Okay, I will go get you and me a plate of food and we will have our dinner up here." She looked at me with that, but still made no other sign.

I jogged down the stars and into the kitchen to get the two of us food, and then popped my head in to tell my family that Mary Elizabeth and I would not be going them. My mother grumbled and the others just shrugged.

Before I took the food to her room I stopped by mine to change into some athletic shorts and a t-shirt. This time I did not even bother to knock. I knew she was in there wallowing in her depression.

"Dinner is served." I announced as I stepped into the now dark room. I set out plates on the dresser as I went to brighten things up. I just did not like this sad and depressed Missy. Granted I did not truly know her at all, but still I did not like it.

I stepped over to her and shook her again, "Missy, you have to eat, even if you don't feel like it. I am not taking you back skinny as a twig."

This time she looked up at me. Her eyes shining just little brighter, her dirty blond curls everywhere, but still her face grim. She never made the move to sit up. "Missy, I will stay here and bug you until you eat something." At that she sat up with her back up against the head board. Still she never said a word. I carried her dinner to her. And because she never made a move to eat it, I placed it in her lap. I knew she was upset but she was starting to get on my nerves. I mean God, really? What could possibly have

her in this condition? I knew what my father had said, but that should have never set her off like this.

After I was done with half of my food she picked her fork and began. "There you go." I said trying to lighten the mood. It did the exact opposite. She dropped her fork and covered her face with her hands - weeping.

Shit, I said to myself as I dropped my plate beside me and ran to her. Placing her plate on the bedside table I pulled her into me. Willingly she clutched to me, again. It seemed we were going to make a habit of this.

"Missy, I know we have not really been friends but you can tell me what's going on. Who knows, it may even help." I cooed in her ear. She did not say anything. I did not push it, not wanting to cause her to cry more.

We sat there for hours it felt like. Her breathing was now slow. Looking down I found she was asleep. Slowly I unwrapped my arms from around her small waist and went to slide out from under her, but her arms tightened around my neck. 'I knew she wanted

me.' I thought to myself as I unclenched them - smiling.

Her eyes opened sleepily. "Sorry, I did not mean to wake you." I whispered. After that I tiptoed out much the way I came in.

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I would like to send this chapter out to my three number one fans.

WishitwasU

Jamjarz

DaisanDaDork

And as for mistakes, I edited this one in a hurry. Sorry, I just wanted to get it out before I went out.

Like always. VOTE, COMMENT, FAN, Tell a friend????

Chapter 31

The Art of Hope (31)

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Chapter 31

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This one is shorter. Sorry. Hope you enjoy. Plus, I was in a hurry again so any mistakes I am very, very, very sorry.

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Three days, three long days and still Missy is stuck in her room crying at any comment, not talking, and even not eating. I had gotten her to eat once, just one time in the past 3 and a half days. Something is

wrong. I kept thinking that she was sick. This morning when I went to check on her she had just thrown up all of her dinner from last night - the only food she had had in almost five days.

Her being sick meant one thing, it was time to go home. In a way I was happy, I could not take any more of my father, mother, and brother. Although, I would really miss Sid and Fletch. Fletch was really my only real friend. Not to say Jace wasn't. Jace is a great friend and all, but he has fucked things up royally. I just hope to God the King does not get wind of this whole thing, and the only way that will happen is if Missy can get over him fast.

Simply put, it was time to go and that is why we are leaving in four hours.

I knocked on her door just to warn her I was coming in. "Hey Missy!" I said cheerfully. I learned to avoid asking how she was. Every time I would ask she would just break into tears again. But what I saw when I looked in her room shocked me. She was up and moving. Her bed was made and the scent of lavender swam throughout the room from her

shower. She was wearing a knee length navy blue dress with leggings underneath. I stood there dumbfounded. What was this?

She turned around and smiled sheepishly at me. "Good morning." She said in a little more of a cheerful tone. Still I could hear the pain in it, but even with the pain in it I relaxed. I relaxed because she was going to be okay. I just knew it - she is a fighter. After I said nothing she spoke again, "Are you alright?" She asked.

"Um, Yeah, Yeah. It's just nice to hear your voice." She gave me a questioning look. Then I realized what I had said. "Yeah, you know. Because I thought you wear going to waist away into nothing." I added jokingly. And to my surprise she chuckled.

"Did you need something? I was going to go see Sydney. I know I must have scared her when I was... in that state." I could not believe she was just all of the sudden okay. That is just not how it works. Is it?

"Actually, We are leaving to four hours." I put it bluntly.

"Oh," was all she said as worry crossed her forehead.

"I know you don't want to see him, but it is time to face the music." I stated. I knew her mind had wondered of to him.

She turned and began to gather her suitcase from under the bed. "I have to face a lot of music." She mumbled to herself.

"Missy, I know you hate him, but you don't even know his side of the story." I knew for a fact that he felt horrible about it, not that it changes anything.

She spun around and I had the joy, literally, to see her mad. "It's just like you to side with him. You do know I saw him. I saw them both butt fucking naked and he screamed HER name. You have no clue what it is like to see someone you love with your entire heart yell someone's name out in utter pleasure." She spat. Even through the anger I could see how much she was dying from this. I could see how much effort it took for her to just go through every minute of life.

"Sorry, sorry." I said. "But he is my friend and I know that you would still care about one of your friends if

they did something like this." I said knowing I was right.

Her face softened and she looked deep into my eyes. And side five painful words. "He WAS my best friend." Then she turned and began to pack. Then I understood. She had no one now. She could not tell her other friends back home, and the two people she had here were the ones that screwed her over.

"Are you still going to talk to him?" I questioned.

"I have no choice." She stated bluntly.

"Well, if you don't want to you don't have to." I spoke to her back and she packed some more of her clothes.

She stopped and turned to me. "Things are more... complicated now. Well, at least I think they are." She said as she placed her hand on her stomach while looking down.

"Okay, then. I will go tell everyone we are leaving." I said as I walked out the door.

"Hey Eric?" I turned around to see her face looking worried.

"Yeah?"

"Can you send Fletcher in? I need for him to do me a favor." What could she possibly want with Fletch?

"Uh, Yeah he is in my room. I will go get him." What the hell can she need from Fletch that I could not help her with? I mean I was already there. Puzzled and a littler angry I went to get him.

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Missy's POV

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After vomiting again, I was sick. Not physically sick, just sick of how I was acting. How could I just lie around and cry for almost a week. And to top it all off I had no proof that I was really pregnant. Eric had just left and I was glad that we were going back - even if that means that I had to face Jace. I still could not believe how low I let myself get. I could possibly have a child inside me. I had to take care of myself. I had to be strong and I was being selfish. Yes, I may have had my heart broken. Yes, I may not have anyone to truly lean on. And Yes, I was kind of all

alone. But, I had so much more than most of the people in this world.

No matter how much I told myself I was strong, I still felt the pain in my heart and it hurt like hell. I had trouble breathing, but I would not let anyone see it. Not anymore. I had to be strong; not only for me but for the possible life I could be carrying.

A knock at the door brought me out of my revelation. "Come in." I once again marveled at the feel of talking after such a long time.

Fletcher stood at my door looking uncomfortable, and I felt uncomfortable as I remembered why I asked him here. I needed a pregnancy test, and I needed it before I went home. I wanted to know for sure before I dug myself into a bigger hole.

"Um, Eric said you needed me?" He asked in a shaky voice as he studied the floor.

"Yeah... I need a favor. Can you keep a secret?" I asked hopping that he would not tell his best friend.

"I guess..." he looked up at me confused. I let out a shaky breath.

I may as well get to the point. "I need a pregnancy test. I need it fast, and I need you to not tell anyone." His jaw dropped and he just gawked at me in shock. "Well?"

He shook his head as if he could shake the thoughts away. "Um... Eric's not the father. Is he?" He almost begged. I could not help but chuckle once.

"He only wishes. Why would you think something like that?" I giggled.

"Well... You two-"he quickly shut his mouth. "Never mind, I can get you the test in a few seconds." Way to change the subject.

"Hurry." I whispered as a new feeling of nerves engulfed my body causing my knees to slightly shake.

I turned not waiting for Fletch to leave. I began packing once again, trying to get the anxiety out of me. It was hard. All I could think about is how I was, or could be, bring a child into this world without a family. No father to love it. I was living my worst nightmare - having a child without a father there.

Dropping the clothes from my hand, I pulled my shirt up to expose my belly. I did not look bigger. Well, at least I did not think so. I looked in the mirror pushing out my stomach in order to see what it would look like with the baby weight. What was I thinking; it's only been about three weeks. A creek from the door mad me shuffle to pull my shirt down and to make myself look busy.

"Here" He said as he stuck out his hand touching the box as little as possible. I would have laughed if my nerves did not threaten to knock me on the floor.

"Thanks" I said while taking the box that carried my destiny.

"Not sure if this applies to... your situation but good luck?" He said backing away like I was infested with smallpox.

"Yeah," He turned and left without a goodbye, and to that I was thankful. My hands shaking I padded to the bathroom.

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Not really liking this chapter... No sure why. I worked really hard on it, but just could not get in touch with Missy. Hopefully the next one will be better.

Thanks to any new fans that I have not yet had time to thank. I will get around to it, but I don't have time right now.

Like always, VOTE, COMMENT, FAN, maybe... tell a friend?

Chapter 32

The Art of Hope (32)

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Chapter 31

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I slowly walked from one end of the bathroom to the other over and over again. Never in my life had three minutes lasted so long. Finding that pacing back and forth was not calming my nerves, I sat on the edge of the toilet and stared at the little white stick that I had just urinated on. And I waited. It felt like hours as I glance at the clock on the wall. Who puts a clock in a bathroom anyways? I don't have a clock in my bathroom. Is it necessary to know the time when you

are using the bathroom? Really? The hand moved another notch indicating that the first minute had past.

The nerves and the slow passing of time caused my mind to wonder. And like so many times, they landed on Jace. I could not help but wonder, now that I was over the initial shock, what the hell was he thinking. I was angry, not only at him but also at myself. They always say that love is blind, and I am living proof of that. I felt my heart sink to the bottom of my stomach, and my heart gave another painful throb as I suppressed a scream. I stopped myself, as best I could. I had promised myself I was not going to turn to that beep depression again - never was I going to break it. I had scared Sydney half to death. I had even made Eric worry. I knew he thought I was asleep but I would hear him saying 'What will the King do?' or 'God, I can't take care of anything or anyone'. Truth was, no one had ever taken better care of me or been so sweet. It was good to know that he did have a heart.

I glanced up at the clock again. It was time. As much as I was ready to know, I was scared to death. I had always wanted a big family - five or so kids. But this, this was just not how I wanted it to start it. Gathering the strength I stood taking ever slow steps as my heart began to pound. I found myself wishing that I had never meet Jace. That he was never my friend.

I took another step while thinking. Truth was I would probably be over this whole Jace thing if I did not find him as my best friend. It hurt so much worse knowing that I was betrayed by a friend. Lovers are temporary, friends are forever, but what happens when there both? You get your heart ripped into a billion small pieces, and have to pick them up and super glue them together.

I took yet another step which left me right in front of the counter. I was afraid to look, and my breath came in short shallow gasps. My hand shaking with no way to stop it, I stretched it out until it ran across the plastic. Instantly my eyes snapped shut as I picked it up. Taking a slow deep breath that reached ever corner of my lungs. I opened my eyes.

And there, on the little white stick, was a pink plus sign. I did not have to read the instructions to know what that meant. I was pregnant. Luckily I had already had my breakdown - five days worth, and now my mind speed ahead. I began to think of what I must do to take care of the baby. What I must say to everyone, and what I was going to do about Jace. My first instinct was to tell him first, because he was the father. Yet, he had cheated and I was not ready to even think of speaking to him. Then there was my father. I had no clue what to say to him, or even what he would do. I know he will be disappointed, but I can't just get rid of the baby. It is my child, mine, first and foremost, and it is my responsibility to take care of it. Even if it kills me.

"Missy?" Eric's voice called from my guest room. Quickly I tossed the pregnancy test and the box into the trash - this was not the time for Eric to find out. "Missy?" He called again as he tapped on the door.

"Yeah, Yeah, I am coming" I said in a hast I tried to gather my thoughts.

"Well, let's go then. They are waiting for us to come say bye."

The goodbyes were short. Sydney cried, and I was not sure why. We only talked for a day at the most, but I was sad to see her go as well. We had bonded, and it was so easy. I could not help but to admire the way children can overlook the outside and dive right into the soul.

"What are you thinking about?" Eric questioned from across the jet. His eyes studying me intensely.

"Sydney." I said simply then smiled finding it nice for one word to sum up my thoughts, for once.

"Got to love her." He stated as that smile grazed across his lips while he looked back out the window. "You know," Eric began glancing back at me, "she really does like you. And for that, I have been meaning to thank you." Sincerity flowed out of him in a way I had never seen before.

"No need to thank me. I like her, too." It was nice for someone to want me, and she provided that.

"You don't understand, Missy. With our family there is no such thing as love. You do what you have to, for the country, for the name of the family. But, in one day you showed her more love than any person ever has." He opened his mouth to begin again, but quickly shut it back. His eyes shining with regret - he had more to say, but wouldn't.

"Say it." I said simply. I saw sick of people holding things from me. I wanted to know, even if it hurt.

"It will bring up... him, and I don't want one of your moods." He said a little harsh. I flinched away just from the mention of my... temporary depression.

"Eric, I am over that. I have... bigger fish to fry than sulk around all day." I spat.

"Fine," looking out the window again her began, "It's just that, you showed her love when all love has ever done to you is hurt." His silver-grey eyes meet with mine, and we sat there just staring at one another. The intensity of his stare was enthralling. Suddenly he broke away.

"It's harder than you think." I mumbled.

He must have herd. "If you told me I could understand." And before I could get out a word he was sitting beside me.

"No offence, but you are kinda the last person I want to talk to." I knew it was harsh but I did not want to talk about it.

"You say that you don't want people to hide anything from you, but that is all you have done the whole time. And if I am not mistaken, I was there for you." Shit, he did have two very a good point and I could tell from the smirk on his face that he knew that.

I took a deep breath. I needed to get it off of my chest anyways. "I-" I began but I just could not get the words out. I was afraid that if I said it then it would be more real.

"Missy, God!" His tone full of frustration. "I hate that you are hiding something. Never have I let a girl cry on my shoulder, I am doing this all so that you father won't have any of our heads on a platter, and here you sit afraid. When are you going to stop being afraid?" He words rushed out, and as soon as they

did his eyes locked with mine and I knew he regretted them.

"If you were in my shoes you would also be afraid." I said in a low voice on the verge of tears. I held them in. I was NOT going to cry.

"Sorry, it's just that I am helping you and I have got nothing in return. Nothing." He said as if I owed him something. And in all truth, I did.

"Is it not obvious? I got my heart ripped out, crush, and hammered with a meatcleaver. And you think there is something else?" I said trying to fake my way out, but the look on his face told me he did not buy it.

"Your hiding something, and when everyone finds out it's just going to hurt that much worse." He said his voice threatening. I knew he was right, but honestly what can I say 'there is a baby in my stomach'? It's just not that simple. "Tell me." He growled.

His breath fanned across my face and into my nose. The smell, although sweet yet spicy, made my stomach turn and I ran to the bathroom. Vomiting up

what little I had to eat before we left, I could hear Eric banging on the door.

"I'm fine. I will be out in a minute. Now, Go away." I yelled at him.

After I had finished and cleaned out my mouth I padded back to my seat and hoped that Eric would just let our conversation go.

"You okay? Are you sick?" He asked actually looking worried.

"Never been better!" I stated rich with sarcasm. This pregnancy thing was not going to be fun.

"Moody much? If I did not know any better I would think you are pregnant." He said rolling his eyes. I shot him a frantic look then quickly looked away. I hope he did not see that, I noted to myself. "Missy?"

I looked at him and understand washed through his silver-grey eyes. "Oh no, you are!" He almost yelled, and I flinched away.

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Another short one, again. Very sorry.

And I know that some of you are not happy that she is preggers. I know that it is a shock and it is going to be hard for her, but I thought it added something to the story. And like I said Next chapter is Jace's and Missy's big talk. Will she tell him? What is Eric going to say? Will Jace tell the truth... Did you like the song?

Thanks again for the votes and comments. I have a new goal.... I want 1,000 votes and 100 fans. Do you think I can do it? I sure hope I can!

Like always Vote, comment, fan... maybe tell a friend?

Chapter 33

The Art of Hope (33)

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Chapter 33

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Recap:

I looked at him and understand washed through his silver-grey eyes. "Oh no, you are!" He almost yelled, and I flinched away.

I did not say a word. What could I say? Eric was rubbing his head and cursing under his breath. He would still angry glances at me and then look at the floor frustrated.

"Damn Eric, say something?" I almost begged.

"Say something? Say something?" He screamed at me as he towered over me. I felt my heart speed and I sunk into my chair. "What do you want me to say? You slept with a man that does not love you, apparently are not smart enough to use protection, and are now impregnated with his child. What the hell can I say?" he screamed yet again. At the moment I realized how much I had depended on him, how much I needed someone and that someone just screamed in my face over something I had no control over.

I could not force the smallest of words to come out as I bit down on my lower lip trying to hold the tears in. I did not work, and they fell like rain on my now red cheeks. As much as I hated to cry I could not stop. Nor could I look him in the eye and tell him I had used protection but that it had failed. All I could do was turn away from him, and look out the window.

I chanted to myself 'You have this baby now. You must be strong for it.' It did no good. I wanted someone to be strong for me, I was sick of being

strong for myself. Not bothering to wipe my tears I curled my legs up to me and hugged my knees, and slowly began to rock myself.

I felt the seat next to me shift but did not look up. I did not want to face him. Everything he said was true, besides the protection part of course.

"Missy, I have been working my fucking ass off to keep Jace and you under wraps. If the King finds out about this you are both died." He spoke as if discussed with me. I could not say that I blamed him, I was discussed with myself as well. "What the hell were you thinking?" He whispered. Still I did not look at him nor did not speak. "Look at me, Missy!" He growled and turned me with his large tan hand.

The moment our eyes meet he let out a frustrated breath. He took his hands and cupped my face. His warm thumbs brushed my tears away. Warmth spread from is touch though my body and I mentally slapped myself. I could not think about the feel of him touching me at a time like this. "What the hell were you thinking?" he whispered as if he could not believe that I was carrying Jace's child in me.

Still I did not speak for lack of words. I just stared into his swirling sliver-grey eyes as they searched my soul. Taking a shaky breath I pulled my hands up to move his. "I was on the pill," was all I could say, and I felt that was all I needed to say.

"Fuck, What are we going to do?" He spoke and the word 'we' stuck out.

"There is no 'we', it's just me, Eric. Only me." I finished as I slowly gained control over myself.

"As much as you want it to be just you, it affects all of us." He said in a grim tone, and his voice frustrated again.

"You think I wished for this?" I spat.

"No, but you had it coming." He stated shrugging his shoulders.

"I hate you." I said, but the truth of the matter was that I hated that I needed him.

"You didn't act like it this past week." A small smirk played on his lips.

"Fuck you. Things are hard enough without you bring that up again. I hate that I did that and I wish you would have just left me there to die." I wept tears trying to escaping once more.

At that he pulled me into his muscular arms, but I pulled away - I did not need to start this again. I squished myself up against the window not looking at him again.

"You can reject me all you want, but you will give in one day." I could just hear the smile on his face.

"No offence, but I don't think that I will be having sex ever again, nor will it be with you." I had no more energy to make my tone harsh.

"That would be wise; you did make one hell of a mistake this time." I knew he was looking at my stomach, I could feel the burn from his stare.

"Why do you think this is all my fault?" My eyes meet his once more.

"I don't," he said shrugging his shoulders.

"Then why are you on my back all the time?"

He reached up to wipe my tears away, again. Then he took one of his hands in mine. I tried to ignore how the memories flashed back to that night. "Have you forgotten that you are taking over the throne? What I am doing to you now is nothing compared to what your father will do. I guess you could say, I am preparing you." I just stared at him. Was he really mad because he cared?

"I think you should take the throne. I am just not cut out for it. Plus, now I have a baby to take care of. Maybe I should just go back to the states. I always knew what to do when I lived there." I rambled thinking to myself mostly.

"Yeah right, he wants you to have it, and going back won't change anything." He stated as he stared at my hand while rubbing circles on it. I quickly jerked it away feeling that the action was too intimate for us. "Sorry," he mumbled as he pulled his hand away.

"What am I going to do?"I asked myself out loud.

"You could always you know... get rid of it." I sat there my mouth agape and glared at him. Heat rushed to my face as I balled my fists.

"You want me to kill my baby?" I scream making every word a sentence all in its own. Red clouded my vision and my fists began to shake.

"It's not a baby. It is not even a thing yet, really. It's just a fetus inside of you, Missy. Don't get mad think about it. No one will ever have to know," his hands up in surrender as he tried to prove his point.

"Shut up and don't ever talk to me again. I can't believe you." I spat as a plopped down in the seat.

We did not speak for the rest of the ride. I was furious with him. Never was I going to cause harm to this baby - born or unborn. I took a step off the jet and the first person I laid eyes on was my father. He and Eric had a silent conversation and I narrowed my eyes. Taking in a deep breath I put on a calm and collected smile and went to hug my dad. A dad that was going to be oh so very disappointed in me, but I pushed that thought away. No need to cry and bring up that conversation early.

"How was your trip? Are you feeling better? Eric told me you were sick. You look a little tiered, why don't you go take a nap?" My father said while pulling me

into another hug. I took comfort in the human contact and hugged him back harder.

"Thanks, I think I will." And without another word I went to my room hoping that I would not see Jace along the way. That was yet another conversation I was not ready for.

Sighing finding my room empty of any unwanted people I went straight to the shower. Turning it on letting the steam fill the room I shimmied out of my clothes.

As the warm water sent my muscles into relaxation, I started thinking. The first thing that was on my list was to find the doctor and get him to 'brief' me on this whole pregnancy thing. I knew already I had messed up by not taking care of myself the past week and I was not going to continue with that.

Secondly, I had to find a way to tell everyone. And in a way that would not cause problems. This only sent my mind into another frenzy and I quickly shut my thoughts off as best I could.

Eric's POV

Anger flowed through me. I had done so much for Missy and it my mentioning abortion she just tossed it aside as if it was nothing. It's not like I told her to go and do it, I was just throwing ideas around. Something within me was wishing to go explain myself to her, but I didn't. That was a fight for another time; she had bigger things to deal with today, and that was Jace.

"Hey man, how was your trip?" Speak of the devil. I looked at the dark hair male in front of me and wondered what I ever saw in him as a friend. Not wanting to talk about Missy I turned and walked away.

I guess he understood where my thoughts went because he asked, "How is she?" in a somewhat shameful voice.

I gave a dark chuckle. "Maybe you should go see for yourself." I spat.

"Fuck, I don't understand why you are so pissed at me. It's not like I am doing something you have not done." His words so true but yet not.

"Yes well, I do not leave you to pick up the pieces of a broken heart either. You have no clue what you have done, and until you fix this thing I would rather not talk to you." Glancing at his slightly shocked face I padded off to find some much needed alcohol.

Missy's POV

I dried my hair and brushed my teeth after putting on a thick hooded sweatshirt because I skipped the bra - still my breasts were very tender. My body was aching for rest, needing it to make it though the day. I collapsed onto the bed as fatigue overran my body.

A knock from the door caused me to groan and roll over. I was not going to get up. Not for anyone. The knock came again. I managed to get out a "Go away" before I turned over again.

"Missy, We need to talk!" Jace's voice sent unwanted shivers down my spine, along with a speeding heart. As much as a wanted to scream and run, all I could do was lay there on my bed and fight the tears that seemed to be my best friend the past week. "I coming in if you let me or not," he threatened. Still I did not move.

I heard the door knob jiggle and I held my breath - scared. All I wanted was some peace and quiet. Some time to myself, but no, Jace had his own plans. It's not like he ever thought about what I wanted anyway.

"Missy, Please look at me." His velvety voice begged. I could imagine his sky blue eyes pulling into a puppy dog pout, but I still did not look. "Fine," he huffed as I felt the bed sink where he sat. I slowly let my breath out and took in another quickly, trying not to cry.

"I guess I should start with I'm sorry. I am so, so, so, so, so, very sorry." He pleaded. And instead of hurt in my heart it was anger. A sat myself up and turn my deathly glare to him and took pleasure when I saw him flinch away.

"If you were sorry you would have never done it." I spat.

"Won't you let me explain?" He sighed looking down at his hands.

"You can do all the explaining you want, but it will never take back what you did. Never." I stated my

voice cold. I took pride that I was angry and not sobbing.

"Where should I start?" He asked himself while rubbing his forehead.

"I don't know, but spit it out I am getting impatient." I growled.

"Well, from the beginning then?" He asked looking into my eyes. "When I first meet you I was amazed. You are so strong and beautiful, and care more for others than you ever do yourself. I have to admit. I loved you from the start." And that was the first time he spoke the word, the sharp pain shot through my heart that it was in past tense. I said nothing and he continued. "I fell for you. Fast and hard, but you never gave me a second glance. And when you finally did, it was all I could do to not make glorious love to you. Back then all I wanted to do was hold you and keep you safe.

"When we came here things started to change. We fought more than ever, we never saw one another, and all the time you seemed to be with Eric." He complained, but he was very wrong.

"I never did spend time with Eric. He just likes harassing me for some reason..." I trailed of thinking about the real reason.

"I know, but that changes nothing." I opened my mouth to argue with him but he held up is finger. "No, let me talk." Irritation flooded through me and I wanted to punch the shit out of him. He had no right to speak to me that way. He was the one that fucked up.

"Can you just get to the point!" I rushed in before he could say anything. He glared at me but nodded.

"Like I said before I loved you, Missy. I really loved you. You have to know that. I even picked out a ring and was going to ask you to marry me." And that is when the anger melted away. It was replaced with longing, a hope, and a single tear. If he only knew that I dreamed about marrying him. My hand went straight to my abdomen where my baby stay - growing.

"Please don't cry." He whispered as his hand glided to my face. I pulled away afraid, afraid of what

memories would be brought back by his touch. I waved my hand in a gesture to continue.

"Before we went to the wedding my feeling began to change. I wanted to love you, but something was pulling me away. I tried to love you again. Believe me, I tried. I stayed awake at night forcing myself to. I did not want to hurt you. I couldn't bring myself to say no to you.

"That's when I started pushing you for... sex. I thought that if we made love then I would love you again. That I would dream about you every night. Like I once did. But, you wanted to make sure that my love was real, and I applaud you for that." He looked at the ground now, ashamed of himself, and even though he broke my heart, I wanted to comfort him.

He drew in a shaky breath. "When you made love to me, Missy, I truly thought I loved you again. I truly thought that I would dream of you holding my child." He said looking into my eyes and the tears escaped. I sobbed and turned away in an effort to control

myself. I couldn't, and I began to shake. "Please, don't cry. Please, it kills me." He pleaded.

I shook my head. "You cheated." Was all I could say, all I could think, and all I could remember.

"I'm sorry." He spoke ashamed.

I waved my hand again ushering him to continue.

This time I did not look at him when he began. "I realized when we arrived back here that I did not love you. I never loved you. That it was the secrets we had to keep that drew me to you. I could not bring myself to tell you. After all you are my best friend." He stopped as if I had something to say to that. I didn't, so I continued trying to hold in the tears.

"I went to the club and Emily was there. She rubbed herself against me and a heat that I had never felt before raged within me. I had a few drinks and before I knew it she was in my room." The memories flooded back as I remembered that he was screaming HER name out in ecstasy. I stopped holding back the tears. I let them fall. I welcomed them. I had nothing

now. Nothing, but this baby. I had no hope of Jace coming back. He never really loved me to begin with.

"Missy, I know you hate me right now, but I really hope that I can get my best friend back." He stated softly.

I stood up and ran. I just ran, desperate to get away, to let go, to forget. I knew it was my room he was in, but I just needed to get away. I wanted to drown myself in alcohol but I wouldn't - not with this baby to take care of.

I heard Jace's screams for me, but I just sprinted to the left following the loud rock music. The music engulfed my body causing my heart to take on a new rhythm. Still I ran afraid to look back. I was going to move forward now. I was going to try my best to forget the past, even if I had a constant reminder of it.

I closed my eyes and took in a large breath while still running. I felt the ache in my heart but I embraced it. I welcomed the pain, because it was something to feel, something to live for. There will always be a brighter day. There has to be. And there, running

though the halls of my new home, I found a tiny sliver of hope.

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WOW! Did I just write that? I can't believe I just wrote something so deep. I am shocked. LOL And I know Missy's POV is a little back and forth but she is beginning to find herself. Anyways I am so very sorry that it took me over a week to post. I know you guys understand so I am just going to say thanks!

And to any new fans. THANK YOU! I am sorry if you don't get a personal thank you, but life is moving to fast at the moment. I am working on slowing it down.

So, What do you think? Does a little part of you forgive Jace? How about Eric and his 'idea'? What do you think the king is going to say?

Like always, VOTE, COMMENT, FAN.... Maybe tell a friend?

Chapter 34

The Art of Hope (34)

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Chapter 34

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Recap:

I closed my eyes and took in a large breath while still running. I felt the ache in my heart but I embraced it. I welcomed the pain, because it was something to feel, something to live for. There will always be a brighter day. There has to be. And there, running though the halls of my new home, I found a tiny sliver of hope.

I slowed myself to a jog when the loud music stopped and eventually stopped myself. Taking in a deep breath through my nose a small ghost of a smile crossed over my lips. I was back. I was me. I was not going to back down. I was going to do what had to be done and not a soul was going to stop me.

A click of a door closing forced my eyes open and they rested on Eric. I could not help but have anger flood through me for a split second. Then I realized he had a different air about him. He was dressed in a dark navy-blue suit. Gold buttons lined his middle, a chain slung in a circle on his right shoulder-pad. My eyes followed down the length of his body to see white gloves on his super large hands and then to his lean legs that sported matching navy-blue slacks with gold strip down the seam. He did not say a word as my eyes worked their way back up to his silver-grey ones. The silver grey eyes that now had a spark of blue within them.

Standing there with my new found hope, I saw Eric for what he truly was - A leader. No longer was he the sex crazed boy with major respect problems. He was

a leader, a ruler, a man to be reckoned with. The smile grew on my face - it seems I am not the only one finding myself today.

He dusted off his left shoulder and fixed his glove back in place. "Where are you going?" I asked in an playfully accusing tone.

"Oh, so your speaking to me now?" He spat. Suddenly him telling me to kill my baby flooded back to me and my smile turned to a deep frown.

"I'm still pissed at you about that." I said in a dangerously dark tone. "Are you going to tell me where you are going looking so dashing?"

"I know you're still pissed. And for you information I have a meeting with the President of the United States." Wow, who acts that composed when meeting someone so important?

"Wow, can I ask what it is all about?" I asked, suddenly ecstatic by the fact that I would one day have a chance to do the same as him.

"No. And why so happy all the sudden or are you going to break into tears in a second?" He smirked.

"I guess I am stronger than you think, Eric. And if you did not know I have more of a right to know what is going on than you." I said a smirk playing on my lips. I enjoyed the feeling of picking and joking so much that I had all but forgotten what he had said.

He began to walk away. "They want to use this island as a military base for the war." I sucked in sharp breath. He chuckled, "Don't worry, babe, we plan on telling them no."

He straightened his shoulder making him look at least two inches taller, and strode away.

"Oh, and Eric?" I yelled down the hall.

"Yes, babe." He spoke without turning.

"I still hate you." I spat. Nothing would take back what he said to me.

He turned around and he features look almost gloomy. "I know, babe. Believe me, I know." With that he turned to corner and was gone.

I let out a small giggle. I have heard of a 'love-hate' relationships but it seems that with me and Eric it is

just a hate relationship. At least it is an honest relationship, I thought glumly.

I began to just walk, not wanting to risk the chance that Jace may still be in my room. I would rather not talk to him, ever again.

Not noticing where I was going I looked up to see that I was planted in front of my father's door. Was this a sign? Should I tell him, now?

"Miss, Mary?" A sweet young voice came from my left side. I turned to be met with a set of dark blue eyes. Eyes I have never seen.

"Yes?" I asked wondering why this maid was addressing me.

"Sorry to bother you ma'am, but your father set up a doctor's appointment for you." The young girl studied the ground.

"Yes, and what time is it?" I asked just wanting to know the answer. It must have came out somewhat cold because she cringed and took a step back.

"In about half an hour, ma'am." She stated and turned to practically run away making me feel bad for snapping at her.

I sighed and made my way down the hall to my very own room.

I sat on the cold hard chair in the doctor's office. You would think that a doctor's office in a castle would be homier, but no it was just as cold and depressing as any other. I felt the nerves that I had felt the day of the pregnancy test swell up into my stomach. The rolling and fluttering sensation cause my gag response to trigger and I did, yet another, mad dash to the bathroom.

Vomiting the contents of my stomach I silently cursed to myself. This was the worst thing ever. Not that vomiting caused me pain but it was so inconvenient and not to mention, unpleasant. After washing my hands I padded down the hall. The carpet warm under my bare feet and a faint breeze chilled my naked legs. Yes I should be more covered up. Shorts and a large sweatshirt were not something that

should be worn if you are royal, but I was carrying a love child so I was going to do as I pleased.

"Mary Elizabeth, there you are! The King said you have been sick?" A grey haired, short man said with no interest.

May as well get it over with, I thought to myself. "I am pregnant. And I would also like to point out that that fact will NEVER leave this room." I stated with as much authority as I could muster.

The old man gave me a blank stare and I coughed to get his attention. He shook his head and glanced at his clip bored.

"Um, yes Mary Elizabeth, lets lay you back so I can have a look, Okay?" His tone somewhat friendlier this time.

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Hey Gang,

I know this one is so much shorter and more of the filler type, but even though nothing happens in it, it is still important. Secondly, I know it is taking me

forever to upload. I just have so much going on right now. But I am working on it. And I heads up, I have a very large English paper coming up that is 35% of my grade this month so it may take my just a little longer.

Like always, VOTE, COMMENT, FAN, maybe tell a friend? Please and Thanks.

Chapter 35

The Art of Hope (35)

Chapter 35

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I glance down at the incredibly fat tan color pill and shuddered inwardly. The doctor had put me on vitamins last week. I sighed, today was the one month mark. I, Missy the reasonable one, am now four weeks pregnant with a love child. I chuckled to myself finding my life somewhat crazy.

The cabinet beside me slammed and I looked up to find Eric - a deep crease in his brow. I did not speak a word. In fact, we have not spoken since the day a saw him in his 'get-up'. I just could not bring myself to,

and speaking to him then was just a leak in my judgment. How could I ever act so calm after what he suggested?

He stomped to the refrigerator and grabbed a gallon of milk and then proceeded to stomp to the counter. He looked just like a three year old that did not get their way. I followed suit only not acting like a big fat baby, because, truly, I was the only one that had a right to be acting like one, and I wasn't.

I sat myself right down beside him, not being able to help myself. Now that I was feeling better, emotionally, I could not help but to rub it into someone's face. I hummed a random tune as loud as I could while pouring some milk in my cereal. Stilling a quick glance over at his face I saw that he really was in a bad mood. Most of the time he would just give me a death glare and go on with his life, but not this morning he only sat there staring at his cereal. Curiosity consumed every corner of my mind, searching for something that could answer the unspoken question.

Just when I was about to break, just when I was going to cave in, just when I open my mouth to speak, a tiny little maid came in.

"Eirc," her thick French accent ran through the air like the smell of freshly made bread. I turned my full body as she swayed her hips trying to gain his attention. She brought her lips to his ear, "I miss you sneaking into my room." Her fingers ran along the side of his still frowning face and all the way to his thigh, and I held in a gag. "I would not mind having some fun again." This time I could not help myself from the disgust so I stood and placed my dirty dish in the sink. She can clean that damn thing.

I practically ran out of the room but not before I heard her say, "I want you to fuck me hard." I quivered in repulsion wondering why I ever leaned on him. He was only trying to fuck me, and that was so clear it made me sick. Leaning my back aligned with the wall I banged my head against the wall. I was so stupid.

I felt presences beside me, that feeling that someone is watching so I quickly opened my eyes. Eric stood

not one foot from me just staring at me. His eyes dark and forsaken tell me something was truly wrong with him - the curiosity once again running wild within my veins.

"Mary Elizabeth, You have a phone call from Annie." Emily's voice came. I quickly averted my gaze to her. She looked at me with such sorrow - like always. And even though she did not know, even thought Jace had played her as well, I could not help but hate her. I just shook my head and made my way to the phone leaving her and Eric behind.

Eric's POV

I could not shake this feeling; I could not enjoy anything sexually anymore. Nothing, and I had tried everything. I had gotten drunk off my ass and I had gotten, I don't know how many, blow jobs, but nothing was working. My sex life at the moment was so lacking and that was getting to my brain.

"I want you to fuck me hard." The maid spoke seductively in my ear, but nothing came. I felt nothing. Nothing at all. I just shook my head and walked away ashamed that I could not get turned on.

I had fucked the girl hard, twice I think, and she was a hell of a fun ride. Her body could twist and turn in so many ways it would light anyone's fire, but not mine, not today. I actually felt sick thinking about it, and that, I could not understand.

I followed the path that Missy took and was startled to find that she was right outside the door banging the back of her head on the wall. Her soft dark blond curls bounced with each thrust of her head. I could only stare at her in envy. She was so freaking happy right now, and all over a child. A child with a man she hated.

I guess she felt my envious stare because she brought her stunning eyes to meet mine. Her full lips quivered as if she was to speak and just then Emily yelled something to her. I did not pay any attention because I was engrossed in the way her lips turned down and she actually showed some form of hurt.

Missy turned saying not a word and left me standing here, lost in the smell of lavender she always left behind.

"Hey baby," The maid whispered in my ear while her thin fingers ran down my abs to my member. "I think we should head up to your room." I stole a glance at her face as she licked her lips seductively. I still fought with myself. The girl standing in front of me really was an image to be seen. Many men would call her the eighth wonder of the world with her long blond hair and bright blue eyes. Not to mention the fact that the girl had a hell of a rack on her, and a firm ass to boot.

"Sorry sugar, I have things to do." I said as I quickly moved her hand and turned to walk away. I could not have rumors going around about me losing my sexual drive. That would be the end of me.

Missy's POV

"No, FUCKING, way!" Annie screamed into the phone. I had just told her everything. I told her about me and the Kingdom, Jace getting me pregnant, and that he had also cheated on me.

"Yes, Fucking, Way!" I said in a bored tone. The weight of all of it finding its way back into my heart, but I tried very hard to let it go.

"And so this Eric guy helped you through all of it? Then he wanted you to kill the BABY?" She screamed. "What a dick!" I kind of felt a pain at the word and him being in the same sentence. Something in me was still soft toward him. I knew that was because he was there for me even if it was only because he was the only one around.

"Yep, Sorry Annie but I have stuff I have to get done. I gotta go." I said really not having anything to do, but I was so emotionally drained.

"Okay, But you have to call me, and tell your father. Plus, I want to come see the baby." She exclaimed happily not aware of how much it hurt me to have this child inside of me.

I forced a smile on my face even though I knew she could not see me, "You bet, and would you be the god mother?" I asked.

"Are you kidding me?" She yelled. "I would love to be you baby's godmother." I could hear her jumping in the background.

"Okay then, well, I have to go. Talk to you soon. Bye."

"Bye, and good luck telling your father." She whispered.

Hanging up the phone it hit me. This was going to be hard as shit, trying to stay happy and stress free for the baby. I let my hand run down to my abdomen. It was hard to believe something was there, no noticeable growth had happened yet. But, I felt the warmth and the love for the child in my heart and that brought a smile to my face.

"Hey Girl, Man it is nice to see that smile on your face." Tony said quickly followed in by Mike. The guys I knew had to be together. The way Mike looked at Tony with such love and caring it almost hurt. I sighed, trying very hard not to feel jealous.

"Hey guys!" I beamed as Tony ran to me and engulfed me in a bear hug.

Mike laughed and came to do the same. I was a little taken aback by the fact that I hardly knew the guys and they cared so much for me. "We came to take you dancing so go and get some sexy clothes on. You promised us both a dance ages ago." He said as he flicked his wrist in a girlish fashion.

"Yes, and remember Tony, she has some dangerous moves." Mike chimed at the end. It was the first time I had ever heard the boy talk out loud and I was amazed by his deep voice and thick French accent.

"Okay, okay," I gave in with a chuckle, "But you have to help me find some dancing clothes!"

Eric's POV

The flashing lights of the make-shift club caused my already drunken head to spin, but I did not give a shit. I grinded hard with the maid from this morning failing miserably at what her name was. I was hoping to score tonight, to have my dick sucked and to be pampered like a fucking sex God. I was so sick of not getting any; in fact I had not scored since Missy had come to the kingdom. That was a good four months, I think.

"Oh, baby," she moaned as I felt her nips get hard under her thin shirt. I ran my hand down to her bum and squeezed as hard as I could and she wrapped on leg around me so the all her weight was on me, and I grinded into her hoping that somehow I would find myself getting hard. "Can we leave?" She begged. "I

don't think I can hold out any longer baby." She purred, but I was not ready to leave not until I knew that I still had the ability to get turned on by a women. I was actually starting to worry I was becoming gay.

"Not now baby, I have not even gotten a proper buzz." It was a lie, but I had to think of something.

"Fuck, I am wetting myself and all you fucking care about is your drinking habits." She stomped away furious at me, but all I did was chuckle.

Walking over to the bar I asked for a shot of Vodka, downed it and glanced around the place in search of a new dance partner and that is when I saw her. A glittery red tub-top lightly hung to her perfect chest and the short shorts showing off her nicely toned ass. She threw her had back and laughed as the two gay wads made some kind of joke. All that I did for her and never once did she laugh like that. They all made their way over near me, and I turned downing my Vodka and asking for another one.

"What would you like to drink Missy?" No fucking way, she was yelling at me for the whole getting rid

of the problem thing and then coming out and drinking the poor thing to death. Angrily I took another shot of Vodka that was laid out for me.

She giggled and I found myself smiling at the sound before I shook it away. "Sorry boys but I am not drinking tonight, I am just here to dance!" She said while shaking her hips and I watched as her breasts did a slight bounce. Before I knew it I was hard, so hard it hurt for me to stand. I silently thanked God that I was finally turned on by a woman.

I motioned for another shot and downed it in no time.

Missy noticed me and gave me a death glare before grabbing the two gay guys' hands and pulled them to the dance floor. I watched in envy as one took her backside and the other took her front. She bumped and grinded with them as if she had no cares in the world. And again, I found myself smiling as she laughed and threw her head back. Her soft dirty-blond curls bouncing up and down, causing memories of that night to float back into my head. Suddenly I was remembering the way her skin tasted

and the way she moaned my name. Again, I got a hard on thinking about it. Not wanting to waste a perfectly good arousal I slid my way through the crowd to her after I downed another shot of Vodka feeling the walls spin.

Missy's POV

I was having such a great time Mike and Tony were grinding up on both sides of me but I knew that they were really wishing to grind with one another. I sneakily slid out from between them and dance beside them letting them have their moment. I laughed to myself at how much they were like animals; many think that gays are sweet and delicate but they were like lions ripping at one another's clothes.

Abruptly I felt large masculine hands on my waist as I was pulled into an incredibly tall and muscular frame. Not being able to help myself I caved into it letting the steady beat of the music move my own body in ways that should be illegal. All I could think was more as I turned myself around and the man

placed is large thigh between my legs making a humping motion.

I froze. I knew who it was right then, I had dance like this with a large man once before - Eric. Heat rushed up to my face as I took a step back not making eye contact. Briskly I walked out the door and down the hall away from the crazy party. What the hell was I thinking?

"Babe," Eric slurred voice came. He was drunk, just great.

I stepped up the pace turn a left making my way to my room. His heavy footsteps fallowed suit. "Come on, Missy. Can't you just let go for one night."

I did, and ended up getting pregnant, I thought to myself. Breathing a sigh my door came into view. Grabbing the handle I turned it, but before I could open it I was turned around and shoved into the wall.

Eric's lips met mine. I froze, shocked at what was happening. The strong smell of alcohol hit me as his extremely soft lips nipped at mine. I gasped and he

took that moment to venture inside. His tongue ran circles against mine and I got lost in his touch as warm vibrations ran from my mouth to the tips of my toes. The beat of my heart racing and my breath catching, I began to kiss back. One of Eric's hands ran down the side of my body and lifted the edge of my shirt to rub soft circles on my back. It was not long before I completely gave into him. My hands ran up his biceps and wrapped around his neck, pulling him closer. Soon I lost sight of everything and like Eric said too, I just let go. He left my lips and I let out a slight huff of irritation. Breathing on my neck his hands found their way up my shirt a little more and the once soft circles became rough and needing.

"Just let me take you to your room, and show you a good time, babe." He whispered in my ear sending uncontrollable shivers of pleasure down my spine.

I wanted to say no, I wanted to push him off and call him names, I wanted to hate him for making me get so fucking horny, but I just couldn't.

He kissed the soft skin right below my earlobe and my knees went weak. He pulled me to him letting of a

light chuckle. "So what do you say?" He asked before he ran his nose along my jaw, and if I was not mistaken he inhaled my sent.

All I could do was shake my head no. Nothing so careless was going to happen to me again, not on my watch. He groaned and slammed his body against mine hard, and I could feel his need for me on my thigh. "Do you know what you are fucking doing to me? I can't hold out any longer, Missy?" His teeth ground together and spurts of fire shot through my body. His need become a need of my very own.

"I just can't do th-"And I was cut off by his lips once more. This time they were convincing, needing, threatening, and I could not say no. While his lips still danced with mine I nodded my head, giving into him, giving up. What's the worst that could happen? I am already pregnant.

All the sudden he stopped and moved his head away to look me directly in my eyes. The piercing grey orbs drinking in my soul as I took on his shocked expression. "Really?" He spoke breathlessly as his lips

turned into a breathtaking smile. I found myself smiling also.

Shrugging I spoke "Why not?" Before I knew it I was pulled into a bear hug and was spun around in a circle and place on the ground as he gave me love bites all along my neck.

"So I broke your heart, eh?" A once smooth velvety voice barked at me. My heart stopped and gave one painful throb as reality came crashing down. I quickly stepped away, ashamed of what I was just about to do.

I did not say a word, nor did I look him in the eye. I just stood there saying nothing a studying my freshly painted toes in my black peep-toe pumps.

"Go away, Jace!" Eric barked right back.

"And you said I was the one that screwed up? How fucking gay! What gives you any right to be touching her?" Jace spat as if he owned me, and I felt tears beginning to surface.

"Fuck you. This is twice you have gotten in our way!" Eric roared in complete anger. This time my eyes

widened and I gave Eric a warning glare. He better not say a word.

"What the hell? We were dating Eric, sorry if that got in your way." Jace chuckled and stole a glance at me but I quickly averted my eyes. Trying to hold onto what was left of my broken heart.

"You didn't know?" Eric asked with a mischievous smile on his face. NO, I scream in my head looking at him franticly.

"Spit it out, pretty boy." Jace spoke between his teeth as he inched closer to Eric who sported a large smirk.

"I was the one pleasuring her that night, you know? The time you fucked up and came running to her only to find that she was with another man. That man was me." Eric stated with the most pleasurable face I have ever seen.

Everything crumbled in me, and I dropped to the ground not caring what I looked like. I covered my face with my hands, silently screaming every word in the book.

"And you called me a fucking cheater? God, I should have known you were a slut! I can't fucking believe you and your whole heartbroken crap. You lied." He screamed, and he came to me and shaked with such force I felt my brain move. I lost it, I lost all control I had mustered up, and I cried.

"Jace, I think you should go." Eric said his tone worried.

"Fuck off." Jace yelled, still shaking me.

I felt Jace's hands being ripped from my arms. "Get the fuck away, you have done enough." Just like déjà I was pulled into a set of incredibly large arms and was rocked on the floor. "I am so sorry. I don't know what came over me." He cooed over and over.. I did not know what happened to Jace, I did not want to know.

I could not do this, I thought to myself. Eric is just a player like Jace. Just two seconds ago he was about to do me and here I lie in his arms, crying. Finding my strength, I stood straightened my outfit and walked into my room.

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Ok, so I just want to say that all the bad gay remarks to not reflect the way I feel about gay people. In fact I have gay friends myself.

And I am sorry that the beginning of the chapter is so choppy and bad but I do enjoy like the second half. I bet you guys did not remember that Jace did not know about Eric and Missy's almost one night stand. Hehe well, that is in the open now.

Like always, Vote, fan, comment, Tell a friend?

Chapter 36

The Art of Hope (36)

This chapter goes out to my dear friends Faz and Harris. Faz has lapsed back into a coma. Pray for her and the family. The power of prayer is stronger than anything a doctor can do. Pray that sometime in the very, very, very near future she can read this chapter for herself, and that she can get back to the life she loves. Thank you. And my love goes out to you and the family, Faz.

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Chapter 36

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The long awaited Jace's POV!

I punched the wall, Eric was right I had done enough. Seeing the tears leave her eyes last night killed me. She was my best friend but what was I to do? I did not love her, not the way she loved me.

I could not help but get angry with her. When we arrived here at the Tesoro di Gioiello it felt like a wall was wedged between us, like what we had fell into unseen cracks in the earth. Something was missing and now that I had found out about Missy and Eric's little fling I could not help but feel that that was the reason.

"Why don't you just go talk to her?" Emily's voice rang. I shivered then, the pleasure her voice gave me was everlasting. Something Missy's never gave me. With Missy I felt comfortable, and that was it, nothing more. But with Emily I felt everything, the whole world moved and the sky would spin with her every touch. I could not comprehend how lucky I was that she forgave me. Forgave me when Missy could not, and if I could only explain that to Missy - if she

could not forgive me then maybe the love she felt for me was not real.

"She won't even look at me and I just screwed things up worse now." I said bringing Emily to me in a hug needing the contact to comfort me. Just like every time I held her close, my body went completely relaxed with a slight hum of electricity pulsing through my veins.

"Jace, you have to realize she walked in on us. That would destroy any women, even the strongest ones." I flinched and she wrapped her arms around my neck and circled her fingers in my hair. It's funny how I would have never known how I felt about Emily until I felt that Missy and I were being ripped apart. "What did you do to her anyways?"

"She and Eric were getting so close... I blamed her for cheating on me. I know she didn't but Eric always gets what he wants so I lost my cool." Emily pulled me closer to her.

"Sweetie, I am sorry. It will work out just give her some time to let you go." I pulled her away to press

my lips to hers, and felt her smile against mine as I kissed her with a love that almost hurt.

Missy's POV

Everything Jace had said was true, and that is what hurt the most. I was the cheater, maybe it was my fault that Jace moved on. And unlike the anger I had before this anger was directed only at myself. It was about time I took control of my actions, because I had almost made the biggest mistake with Eric. What was I thinking? That having some fun sex would make everything better? How pathetic of me.

I pulled my hair in a messy bun and walked out into the hall plastering a large smile on my face as I made my way to the fitting area. Today was a dress fitting for my coronation. It was in one month and I had yet to tell my father about my little problem. I was too scared to even think of his reaction. The disappointment that would wash his always happy to see me face will be simply heart wrenching. I needed him to be okay with it, to let it go, to say he was happy to become a grandfather, but I just knew it

would not happen. I was representing a country now, so more was expected of me.

"What? What do you mean it does not fit? Did you take the measurements wrong?" The old lady barked as she tried again to push me into the dress. It was a beautiful deep, dark, violet with a pearl color complements. The corset top would hug my top half as the end branched out into a princess cut if I was not pregnant. She pulled it tight again, but still it did not zip. I huffed as the air shot out from my lungs. "Do you know how long it will take me to fix this?" She said giving up. I desperately wanted to say something. I wanted to tell her that in two weeks I still would not fit, even if she fixed it.

"Maybe I put on a few pounds?" I spoke shyly knowing it was the full truth.

"Well, then. Maybe we should hold off on altering it and see if you can rid yourself of the pounds, eh?" She spoke and I just nodded my head even thought I knew that would never work.

Huffing they helped me out of the dress and I was in my comfortable clothes in no time. And seeing as it

was a Sunday I did not have a schedule to fallow and I was free to do as I pleased. So what did I do? I made up my mind to go for a relaxing swim.

Eric's POV

"What? You must be fooling me. She cannot be pregnant. I know her standards are higher than that." I pressed my ear to the Kings Office door harder as my heart raced on.

"Sir, I checked her out myself and have started her on vitamins of every sort. She is pregnant." The doctor's voice came through muffled but I could still hear the worry in it.

Buttons on the office phone could be heard as the King, I'm guessing, called for security. "Yes, Find Mary Elizabeth and tell her I must speak to her at once." Then he hung up, his voice cold and emotionless.

I sprinted down the hallway, not really knowing where I was going. I had to find her first, to warn her of what was about to happen. Her father was angry, and she was in his path of his destruction. Something

within me was pumping some unknown substance pushing me further to find her. What was it that caused me to keep protecting her?

My legs pushed me fast as I ran to the steps to the pool room. I knew she had to be in there, it was her day off - her day to relax to take in everything and prepare herself for a new week of work. Barging through the doors a found her, a small smile upon her sweet face, her body totally relaxed as she hummed along to the music busting through her ipod.

My body shut down and turned into a soft numb state. My eyes rested on her beauty, her perfection, and her smile - a smile that brought a grin to my face. I shook my head, I was not here to admire her, I was here to help her.

"Missy," I yelled as I jogged over to her where she sat in the hot tub. "Missy!" I yelled in frustration and I reached out to shake her shoulder.

Before I could touch her glowing soft skin she jerked up, "Don't you ever touch me." She screamed her eyes lit with fire burning down to my very core.

"Missy, there are bigger things at hand than your anger." I spoke coolly knowing full and well she had every right to hate me.

"My anger? My anger?" She huffed out of frustration, "You are making things worse for me, Eric. I know you tried to help once, but now you are just messing it all up. I wish that I did not even know you right now." Her tone dangerously dark - just like her father's when he was fuming.

I exhaled and spoke softly knowing she was right, "Missy, I am really sorry. I really am; it's just that my ego gets the best of me and I wanted Jace to know that he was not the only one that was good enough for you." Her green eyes widen at the truth in my voice, but there was something else there - I had flattered her.

Neither of us said a word as she started at me and I at her. For once I looked completely in her soul and saw how utterly selfless she was, how utterly broken she was, how much she needed to lean on someone. And here I was, wrapped up in her. What have I gotten myself into?

Shaking her head she looked down and a faint pink lit up her face. "What did you want anyways, Eric?" She asked turning her tone cold again.

My heart started racing not knowing where to start or how to say it. Taking in air before I let it out I spoke, "Your father has found out."

Her wet curls bounced as she brought her head up with fearful eyes. Plump pink lips turned down as she began to shake her head in denial. "I-I can't... I just can't.... do... this. Not anymore." She stuttered and her hands went to her face.

My body leaped into action before I knew what was going on. I took her hands from her face and tilted her head by her chin forcing her to look at me. "I will be right there with you." Confusion flowed in my mind not knowing why I was saying such things. Why I was caring for this broken girl in front of me.

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Okay, so there it is. I know it is short.

And this time I will not ask for votes, comment, fans (although I really love them, So still leave them) But I

want one prayer for Faz (jamjarz), Harris (her fiancé), and the family for every read this gets.

Chapter 37

The Art of Hope (37)

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Chapter 37

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Eric took me to my room and has me change. I was not capable of walking myself. Fear, plain old fear was coursing throughout my body causing my limbs to shake. I was not scared of what my father might do, no; I was scared of letting him down. Letting down a Kingdom that has yet to know me, because letting down myself was different then letting down others.

"Breathe, Missy, Breath." Eric instructed as he rubs my shoulders. I slowly take in air and let it out, but unlike most times, it does not work and only speeds my heart. "Are you breathing?" I just nod my head unable to form words. Guilt swallows me whole as we stand in my room; A guilt that I have no control over.

"What did you say? Repeat that please?" Eric says studying my lips. I had not even realized I was speaking.

"I let him down. I let down the kingdom. I have let down myself." I can hear my own voice saying these things but I don't fill my lips forming the very words they make.

"You know what?" Eric begins looked down at me a mischievous smile on his rather plump lips, "Let's just get out of here. What do you think?"

My heart instantly slows and the shallow gasps turn more stable - relaxing. I only nod and he grabs my hand starting to run. Down the hall and through the doors and into the garage we go.

He does not let go as he presses a button on his car key. I hear a little beep, a beep that sounded like it would come from a little Volkswagen Punch Bug. Looking up I see Eric's big ass Hummer and that's when I laughed. Hard. Doubling over in laughter, I grasp at his muscular arm to steady myself.

"What the hell is so funny?" Eric accused.

Blurting out a word in between laughs I say, "I just sounds like a little kitty is living inside you lion looking Hummer." I giggled a little after.

"Whatever babe, once I start this baby up; I know you will think otherwise." He winked and I just laughed again walking to the passenger's side. Opening the door, I pulled myself up into the massive machine thanking the lord I had yet to put on a lot of baby weight. Before I could reach for the handle and close the door it was shut and Eric jogged to the driver's side. So, he can be a gentlemen.

"Where to?" I asked, strangely chipper despite everything.

"You'll see." He smiled down at me.

Stopping the Hummer Eric turned to me, "You may want to strap up." His plump lips curve into a fierce smile.

"What are we doing?" I asked a little scared at the tone of his voice, then quickly looking around us to see we are in the middle of nowhere. Rolling hills and rocky land span into a bright blue horizon.

"Just get strapped in and hold on. We are going for a ride." Obeying I pull the harness on and begin buckling myself in.

Before I had finished Eric had thrust the Hummer into drive and had me slung into the seat. Being slung from side to side, bumped up and down, I found myself laughing. Spinning the wheel in a sharp left turn Eric laughed along.

The faint cool air hit my flushed from laughter cheeks as I rolled down the window and Eric turned up his radio to an unknown tune. We squealed in delight into unknown territory for the two of us.

I don't know how long we have been driving around in this abandoned field, but my stomach began to roll

and grumble from the giggles and the jostling. "Stop," I said faintly as I cupped a hand over my mouth.

He did not stop and I figured it was from the loud music, so raising a shaky hand I turned it off and whispered another faint stop. He took an angered look at me, but when his eyes landed on my green coloring and my covered mouth I knew he knew what was going to happen.

"Not in my baby you don't," he grumbled while undoing the buckles across my chest and stomach. I felt the first of the bile rise in my mouth touching the back of my tongue causing me to gag just a little more. Eric reached over me and swung open the door and forcefully turned me to the side. The motion itself making projectile vomit to shoot out from behind closed lips.

"Shit, that is gross. Did you eat something rotten? Or can you just not take the ride?" He joked as I spit out the remainder of my breakfast and lunch. Obviously, the guy knows nothing about pregnancies. But now that I think about it he does not have a reason to.

"No, I am fine thank you. Just one of the joys of having a darling child in me." Despite, the fact it was dripping with sarcasm, I smiled and placed my hand on my abdomen. I loved this child, and Jace being the father would never changed that. It made me think of the talk shows back home where the mother would hate her child just because of the father. How could someone do that?

"I don't get you." A grin in his tone as her turned back on the Hummer.

"And why is that?" I closed my door and buckled back up.

"You just upchucked and you have a huge ass grin on your face after." I silently giggled - he would never understand.

"Until you have a child of your own, Eric, I don't think you ever will."

After a long moment he spoke and I was somewhat saddened with him breaking the comfortable silence. "You love it, don't you." Eric stated as a simple fact, and it was.

"With all that I have within me." Just those words maid my heart sore with love. I realized, again, how selfish I was being, I sill I had love to give and I had someone to give it too. Everything else just seemed unimportant at the moment.

Eric's POV

"With all that I have within me." She said and I watched as her eyes glazed over and that beam of love lit the smooth skin of her face.

After all that she had been through she was still fighting, loving, and carrying on. Turning my attention to the path before me I drove not glancing back at her - she was having a moment, and I had no right to be a part of that moment, so I let her have it to herself.

"Take me to my father. I think it is time he knows what the hell is going on." Determination - it laced the tone she gave me sounding powerful and independent.

"Are you sure?" I did not want this moment of happiness to cause her to make a mistake.

"Eric, I know you don't know much about this... stuff, but I am a month pregnant. He is going to find out. I have already started gaining baby weight. Plus, according to you he already knows, and telling him a white lie will just mess everything up." Her reasoning was wise but I did not want to hold her crying body to mine again - ever.

"Okay then." I nodded.

As I drove the words she was chanting to herself flooded back in to my memory 'I let him down. I let down the kingdom. I have let down myself.' She had said, and I knew she still felt that way. It was so like her to take it out on herself, to make things harder for her. And I would bet money on it that if Jace came running back to her she would take him with open arms - no questions asked. Heat erupted in my veins from the thought of him - my once best friend. But a part of me was thankful to him - I had learned now what my playboy like ways did and can do to people.

I was ready for that next part in my life. Here I am 25 years old, with never having a steady girlfriend, not even thinking about marriage. Now I understood.

The King did not pick me because I am not 'responsible', because I did not seem to care about my future. But the truth of the matter is, I always saw them picking my bride for me. So, I went out and enjoyed my freedom while I could before I was married to a girl with long blond hair, tiny waist, small chest, and obedient virtue about her.

Now that the tables have turned, I see just how immature I was being. I had everything in the palm of my hands. I had a Kingdom that I was sure that would come to me, along with a loyalty from the King that anyone would wish for.

"Do you think my father was planning to marry me off? I mean, is that why he may be so angry? And what do I tell him, Eric, I can't just go in there saying Jace is the father. He would have his head." I was shocked at how our minds were on the same path.

"I really don't know what to tell you, Missy. No, I don't think your father would force you into an arranged marriage. He loves you too much, and the fact that he was not there for you all your life causes him not to push things too far." Stopping, I looked at here. Worry

had set in her features once again and she had her plump pink bottom lip between pearl white teeth. "And as for telling him about Jace I think you should not. Not that I don't think him getting shut out of the Kingdom is a bad thing - in fact, I would rather like that, but it would just cause you pain." I shrugged. Truth was it would cause her pain either way she went.

"I am going to go get this over with. Thanks for kidnapping me for a while." She smiled, hopping from my Hummer. I was not having that.

"Wait, I am going with you, Missy."

She turned, her curls in the messy bun springing for me action. "I think not, I can handle this myself."

"Don't lie." I chuckled, grabbing her hand to pulling her up the stairs.

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3 things...

1) Please keep Faz in your prayers. She has still not woken up yet.

2) My computer is doing strange things. Sometimes it well not start up. So if I disappear for a long time. I am really really really sorry. I will try my best to get it worked out.

3) Also, a lot of things are going on right now. I am really trying to keep up with this writing. If I slake off I just want you to know. I WILL finish the story. I just may need some time for my life. Ok?

Like always vote, comment, become a fan.

Chapter 38

The Art of Hope (38)

Chapter 38

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Eric's POV

I did not let her soft hand go as I pulled her up the stairs to her father's office. I could feel her nerves run wild from the slight shaking of her small hand in mine. But, I was not going to let her out of this. The King deserved to know that he was going to be a grandfather.

I stopped at his door and turned to Missy. Her green eyes wide with fear, but a fake smile plastered her

face and determination etched her brow - she was going to do this, even if it killed her.

"You ready?" I asked, it was a stupid question really, but I could not help the feeling I had to protect her.

"Yep," she popped the 'p' and then slide her bottom lip between her teeth, and her eyes studied the floor. I lean forward without even realizing it; her lips put me into some kind of trance. Taking a step closer she looked up with a jerk and our eyes meet. Then something I never thought would happen,

happened, she looked at my lips and took a step closer. My heart started to pound, and my hearing blocked out all other sounds but our breathing.

I breathed in her sent and slowly let it out as I leaned into her more. Our lips only now two inches apart I wrapped my hands around each side of her thin waist.

"There you are," the King's booming voice came and Missy, in a flash, pulled away from me and pressed her back against the wall like she had been caught committing a crime. "Missy, I must talk to you at

once. We have an important matter to discuss." With that he turned on his heal and proceeded to his office.

Taking a long breath Missy fallowed after him and I fallowed her.

"Have a seat, and Eric, there is no need for you to be here." I looked at Missy and her panic stricken eyes told me she needed me. Just that look did something strange to me. My hands began to give off hot pulses, my ears started to burn, heat waves washed through my frame, and I was itching to hold her in my arms.

"Sir, with all due respect, I think there is a need for me to be here." I took the seat next to Missy and took her hand. The burning lessened from the moment I touched her skin. This feeling was so new to me, and I could not figure you what it was, but I liked it.

"Missy?" the King asked his one word question. All she did was nod.

"I guess I will just get to the point. Missy, I have reason to believe that you are pregnant. Is this true?"

He searched for her eyes but she was looking down at the floor her lips between her teeth again.

There was a long moment of silence. I gave Missy's hand a tight squeeze and her green eyes looked into mine. They pleaded with me, but I just gave her a nod. She had to do this, not me.

Turning her head to her father, "Yes" was all she said.

His face turned red. His hands balled into fists. His eyes began to bug out. Then he hit the table sending vibration outward to cause the pencils to roll off. Never in my life had I seen him loose his cool. The composure that I tried so very hard to copy had just broken in front of my very eyes.

I felt Missy jerk away in fright. Looking over I saw her trying to hold herself together, and by the looks of it she was doing fairly well.

The King stood up towering over us and began to pace back and forth. Missy's breathing picked up but she showed no emotion on her face. I knew better.

The King stopped directly in front of Missy bending down so that his anger filled eyes were level with

hers. "Who is the father?" His eyes flickered to me. Out of all her questions he could have asked he asked to one that would hurt the most. And to top it all off, he had the idea I was the father.

She said nothing. I knew she would never rat out Jace, even if he deserved to be.

"Are you going to tell me, or sit there and bring more disgrace to our name?" He was on the verge of yelling. I felt her flinch again causing me to hold her hand tighter.

The King seemed to notice are intertwined hands for the first time. "Should I have reason to believe that you are the father Eric?" I must have been imagining things, but I thought that his voice and eyes softened at the thought.

Seeing Missy's eyes quickly look up at me, I knew I was not imagining anything. The King WANTED it to be my baby.

"No Dad, the baby's father is and ex-boyfriend of mine." She stated in a rush. I had to say, it was a

smart answer. It was not a lie, yet it was not the whole truth.

Anger flooded his eyes again. He stood with force and pointed to the door. "Out, Out of my sight." He full out yelled at Missy. Without a word she stood, dislodged her hand from mine and was at the door. My mouth dropped.

"Have your things packed and ready to go. You are going back to America. I can't have someone so reckless running my Kingdom." She gave a quick nod and a last glance at me and was gone.

I stood now towering over the King. "That was uncalled-for, sir." I tried to stop the disrespectful words from coming but seeing Missy that way cause me to say what I was feeling. "You found her, you brought her back here, you want her to take over, and you left her and her mother to begin with. How can you just leave her when she needs you the most? Do you realize that if you make her leave now you will NEVER get to see your grandchild she is carrying?" My hands were now shaking.

"What am I to tell the Kingdom, Eric?" His face not showing any signs of realization at my words.

"I guess you should tell them that you have lost the two people that would step in for you when the time comes." I spoke the words before I knew what I was truly saying.

"What do you mean?" Now his face softens.

"I mean, I refuse to work under a King that is so heartless. If you only knew how hard it was for her to come in here. If you only knew how much she was beating herself up. If you only knew...." I shook my head; disgust was all I felt for him at this moment.

"Heartless? How in God's name am I heartless? I took her in when not a soul wanted her." He was being pathetic, really.

"Sir, it's not wrong for you to love her. It is not wrong for you to hate yourself for the mistakes you made in the past. But Sir, It is wrong for you to make the same mistake twice." That was all I said as I walked away to find Missy.

Missy's POV

I smiled to myself. Yep, I was smiling. I could go home. I truly did want to stay. I liked it here, but in all truth this was not what I wanted to do with my life. I thought back to the dream I had with Jace and I holding onto our little baby. That is what I wanted - a family. I wanted to be a stay at home mother, married to a nice man who loved me and would care for me and my many children. I wanted to make homemade meals for him as he came through the door from a hard day's work. Money, fame, being royal was just not simple enough for me, and it was plain to see that I was not truly wanted here. I had no real friends; my father is dropping me like a hat. I still love him though; with every beat of my heart. Nothing could change that.

If I had the choice though, I would stay. Let father give the Kingdom over to Eric, who would be perfect for the job, and I would just live here with a father that loves me and people that would respect me. That was just wishful thinking, and I knew that.

"How long are you going to be gone?" I heard a pouty voice ask.

"I don't know baby, the King says that we are a risk for being attacked and he needs an undercover spy. I will be back when to job is done." I knew that voice right off. It was Jace, and he was going to be gone. I felt my heart flutter at the thought.

"But what about... Missy?" She asked and the happiness quickly drained from my system.

"I don't know, I think I am just going to let it go. It is obvious her and Eric are hitting it off. I have done enough." Let it go? Let it go? I was not angry. I actually like the idea. Maybe I would never tell him about this baby. Maybe I could let him believe that it is someone else's? I smacked my head with my hand. What was I thinking? I could not keep this a secret from him, the father. As much as I hated him for cheating on me I just could not, not tell him.

"I think you should try and talk to her just one more time. What if something happens while you are gone and you never get the chance?" I could hear her worry. Her worry that he may never come back, and I shared that worry. It hurt, knowing that I may

never see him again. I had made my choice - I would tell him tonight.

I continued down the hall, to my room to begin packing. It would not be hard. I had letting clothes here that I could wear back in America. I would easily move in with Annie or even my mother. Things would go back to normal and I would find a man that would love me. Granted I would probably never be able to truly love a man anymore, but I could try.

A knock came at my door and I walked over to open it. Eric stood at my door looking dashing, as always. The memory of our almost kiss flooded back and I had that urge again. I quickly turned to my suitcase and began packing again. Eric's heavy footsteps were heard behind me. I turned to my undergarment drawer grabbed a handful and walked to the suitcase. Throwing them in the case I went to get more from the drawer only to find the same handful of thongs and panties in the drawer.

"What are you doing Eric?" I huffed as I turned to find him putting my clothes back.

"You are not going anywhere, Babe." A shiver ran down my spine from the way he said 'bade'.

"Yes I am. I don't want to stay here anyways." I lied. Well, It was half true.

"Don't lie. You know I can tell you are." He winked while pulling out a pair of my black lacy G string thong.

"Give it back." I said slowly like he was a dog that had my homework in his mouth.

"Only if you sport it for me, babe." He winked again as a wicked smile broke out across his face.

"In your dreams," I yelled then tackled him to the ground. He never knew what hit him. Taking advantage of his surprise I stole my underwear away from him. Then sat myself up with a bouncy 'take that' throwing my arms in the air at my victory. I felt something prod near my left butt cheek. That's when I realized I was straddling him, bouncing in victory, and was holding my most showing undergarments I owned. No wonder he had a hard on. I blushed fiercely and stood off of him.

He rolled over and quickly bounced to his feet. "Sorry," He mumbled. "and remember you are not going anywhere. You deserve to be here." His words made me feel as if I was meant to be here, but I knew better.

"Eric, no one here wants me. Why should I stay?" I knew I sounded like a brat, but it was the truth.

"You're wrong about that." Our eyes meet for the millionth time today and a cold heat ran through my body. Something was humming between us. An understanding, pity for one another, a friendship was blooming between Eric and I, of all people. "Start unpacking. If you don't I just may make you sport those pretty little panties around for me, babe." He gave another wicked wink and was gone.

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

Okay so, I just want to say that some of you guys asked that Jace be sent on a mission. Well, I had this planed form the beginning. :D You're welcome.

Plus, FAZ is awake. Thanks so much for the prayers. I know that the power of prayer has helped her get better.

Like always, vote, comment and fan. :D

Chapter 39

The Art of Hope (39)

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Chapter 39

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I was in a spirited mood after I packed my clothes away. I was surprised how I snapped back to myself after the whole deal with my father. Truth be told, I could not be mad at him, I loved him even if he was gone all my life, he has showed me more love than any other person. Plus, I needed to get yelled at, I needed to have someone get angry at me. As strange as it may sound.

I sat on the side of the bed for a minute looking and the ruby ring on my finger. Unlike my feelings toward Jace, I knew my father loved me. So many things pointed to that fact, and to be completely honest with myself I feel the same way he does with this whole situation.

I pulled on my red bikini and grabbed a towel from the bathroom. Thank Goodness my baby-belly had yet to show. I pulled my hair up as I made my way to the pool needing to relax before I talked to Jace. As much as I did not want to, I had to. Knowing what it is like to grow up without a father has changed how I look at life, and I would put myself through pain everyday as long as the baby had everything it needed.

The warm water caressed my feet as I lowered myself into it. Slowly, it engulfed my thighs, stomach, and soon all the way to my neck. Taking in a breath of contentment I lowered my head into the water trying to wash away the heartache and nerves.

Jace, I thought about him again. I felt a longing for him, almost a need for him to hold me tightly to him.

My heart pounded but it was nothing like before - I was slowly beginning to heal. Thinking about him did not take my breath away anymore.

I came up for air letting my body float on my back. After I spoke with Jace he would be gone anyways, and I would be here able to nurture this child of mine. A beam stretched across my face. The happiness caused me to inhale in deeply through my nose and the smell of pool sent my stomaching into overdrive. In a shot I was swimming to the nearest corner pulling myself out.

My hand clasped over my mouth I ran to the bathroom, but as soon as my stomach turned it was gone and I felt good as new. "Thank you God." I whispered. I hated nothing more than vomiting every hour.

"I knew it. You praise God for me." Eric said from behind me. I began to laugh and was going to say some smart-ass remark about how God had nothing to do with making him, but he wrapped his arms around me from the back and picked me up.

"Don't do it!" I screamed as he brought me to the side of the pool.

"And why not, babe?" His lips so dangerously close to my ear that I shivered and he pulled me closer.

"You do it and you will never be able to fuck a soul again." My voice serious as ever.

He took another step to the pool and I began to thrash around. "Eric." This time my voice cold as ice.

"Yes, Babe." He chuckled leaning his head to the right so I could see him from the corner of my eyes. I took it to my advantage and elbowed him in the nose. The strong grip released my waist and his hands went to his face. "Shit, Missy!"

Guilt consumed me. I had never meant to hurt him. "Aw, Eric, I did not mean to. Please, just let me have a look at it."

Taking to very large steps back he shook his head, "No fucking way." One drop of blood ran down from under his hands, I giggled.

"Come on you big baby." Approaching him he took more steps backward ending up against the wall. His panicked face looked for a way out but I had my hand over his. For a second I marveled at the pure size of him. His height and how his hands were three times bigger than mine, but soon I had pulled those over sized hands away and was looking up at his perfectly straight bleeding nose.

"It's not that bad, really. Not even broken." I giggled and lowered myself down off of my tippy toes, but the look in his eyes stopped me. Something was burning there, something between a mischievous look and one of admiration, and I could not walk away.

"Sorry to interrupt," Jace's voice range from the other end of the pool room. Slowly I moved away from Eric.

"Jace, I think it best if you just leave." Eric growled. I placed my hand on his well defined chest to control his anger.

"Eric, it's okay. I need to talk to him." His silver-gray eyes widened in shock. I just nodded knowing his

question. I began to pull away toward Jace but Eric's large hand pulled me back.

"Are you sure?" The fact that someone cared brought a swell to my heart and a faint tear to my eye. Eric really and truly cared. I wanted to kiss him right then. I wanted to hug him and tell him thank you, but I couldn't. Eric was just a friend, if that, and all he wanted was sex.

"I'm sure." I stood on the very tips of my toes and with effort placed a light kiss on his cheek.

Eric's

"Eric, it's okay. I need to talk to him." Those words did not just come out of here mouth, did they? She gave a slight nod letting me know that she was going to, and began to pull away. I pulled her back to me for just a second. I was afraid of what this meeting could do to her.

"Are you sure?" I, the famous ladies man, was worried about a pregnant princess? I was surprising myself. Looking into her breathtaking green eyes I saw a flash of sadness.

"I'm sure." And then she lifted her short frame placing her sweet plump lips on my cheek. My heart raced and heat flooded from that spot on my face, and I instantly wanted more. I wanted oh so very much more. But before I could demand what I wanted she was jogging off to Jace in that skimpy ass bikini. That skimpy ass bikini that simply drove me crazy almost to the point where I could jump her.

I saw Jace mumble something and nod his head to the side and she began to walk away with him. With one last glance at me she smiled, a sad smile. I was itching to go with her, to shield her from the hurt that would soon engulf her.

Missy's POV

I fallowed two steps behind Jace, making sure he could not see my panic attack coming on. Was I really going to do this? I kept asking myself this over and over, and the answer I kept coming up with was yes.

We ended in the hallway. Just in the middle of everyone. "We need to go somewhere private." A confused look crossed his face but he nodded and led the way to a maid's room.

He turned to me sharply as soon as the door was shut. "I am going to just get down to it. I am sorry Missy. I truly am, it is killing me that you hate me so." My heart dropped. This was going to be so much harder than a thought.

"I don't hate you." I mumbled.

"How can you not fucking hate me? Missy, I have done the worst thing to you. I was your... boyfriend... and your best friend." There it was again the word 'friend'. He thought of me as a 'friend', nothing more. I held back a tear and my heart quickened.

A minute of pure silence settled in the room. "Because," my voice hard and rocky for unshed tears, "I-I love you." What was I saying? The three words, the truth, I did not want to tell him. I covered my mouth with my hand and felt my head shake back and forth violently.

He was silent. I was silent. Nothing could be heard over the pounding of my heart. After what seems like hours it finally slowed and I forced my eyes to connect with Jace's Sky blue ones.

"Jace, you may want to sit- sit- down." I could not look at him. Studying the floor my knees began to shake and my heart began to race. Perspiration gathered at my brow and on my hands.

"Missy? Missy?" I still did not answer. "Missy, What the hell is going on?" He was so close to me I could feel the heat from his body. It had been so long, oh so very long, I had almost forgotten the feel of him. I had almost forgotten the smell. "Missy," his voice growled at me.

You can do this, I chanted over and over. "Missy, Fuck, Just tell me what's going on!" Aggravation laced his tone causing me to flinch away.

"Jus- Just sit first." My eyes still on the floor I saw his feet shuffle and sit on the edge of some maid's bed.

"Okay, so spit it the fuck out." Anger flush through me, and I considered for a second to not even tell him.

"I-I'm..." My lips formed a line ready to push the 'p' out but my body shut down and nothing came out.

"Yes..." I took in a load of air. He needed to know, he needed to know, he needed to know. I chanted this over and over trying to make myself believe it.

He stood and I held my hand up, "Sit."

"Then tell me!" His voice growing louder.

"Do you really want to know?" I yelled back anger chasing my fears away.

"Yes, fuck, just tell me already." He ran his hands through his hair.

"I'm pregnant!" I did not wait for his reaction, I was far too angry for that. I trudged down the hall in my little red bikini cursing to myself. Turning a right, I stopped and punched the wall. Stupid pregnancy has my hormones in a tussle. Stupid Jace for making me cry at the silliest of things. Stupid baby that I love with every beat of my heart.

Resting my head against the wall I forced myself to gain balance. "Missy," I turned unable to really care what Jace had to say. "Take me back?" My heart stopped.

"What?" I pinched my arm trying to wake myself up. Could this really be true?

"Take me back!" This time it was not a question but a command.

"But...?" I could not find the words and I did not understand the feeling I was getting. It was not happiness but it was not sadness either. I was confused. The feel of his lips on mine broke my thought. I slowly began to kiss back desperate to find the spark that was once there. To find the love that had broken my heart, to love him again. And it was... gone. I broke away shaking my head back and forth.

"Missy, please take me back. I am sorry and you are carrying my... child." So that is way he wanted me back because I was having his baby. I began to laugh uncontrollably. This was just my luck.

"What the fuck is so funny?" I just laughed even more and walked away leaving him there without another word.

Could it be that I was over the father of my baby? I felt giddy just thinking that it could be so.

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So? What did you think? Ended on a happy note... :D

Like always Comment, Vote, Fan.

Loves,

Newhope

Chapter 40

The Art of Hope (40)

Chapter 40

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Beaming I ran. I just ran letting my heart lead me to where it would, letting my curls bounce in the air, letting everything that was causing me pain just float away.

Turning a right down a hallway I had never been before I saw Eric. His back leaned against the wall and his head pointed into the heavens.

"Eric!" I yelled and I myself could hear the happiness ring through the halls. I began skipping from the

happiness I was feeling. I felt free, open, and just plan content.

"Eric!" I screamed again bubbling over with bliss. "You will never guess what happened!" I said slowing down to a jog as I approached.

"What did he take you back?" I was offended by the cold tone in his voice.

"No," My spirits dropped from his anger. For some reason I wanted him to be happy about it, and to have someone to celebrate with - Eric.

"Really?" I thought I heard relief in his voice.

I beamed again and looked up into his stunning sliver-grey eyes. "He wanted to, but I-I'm... over him." A smile engulfed his face and it lit up the room. I started to jump up and down letting the joy take total control over me.

Suddenly I was scooped up into a massive frame. Massive arms consumed me holding me off the ground. His head nestled in my neck and his breath heated the very soft spot causing me to shudder. I hugged him back letting my skinny arms embrace

the trunk of his neck. My feet now lightly swing from side to side, a good foot off the ground, as he swung me in his grasp.

My heart began to pound and I inhaled Eric's perfect spicy scent. Who was I kidding; every part of this man was perfect, even the cocky perverted side was perfect. That is when I realized it - I was falling for Eric.

Eric's POV

"Eric!" Missy screamed again and I instantly detected the happiness in her voice - my heart dropped. She had taken him back. How could she even dream up such a thing? After all that he has done to her. And I would be forced to pick up the pieces once again. I would have to see her heart broken and lonely, and I have to admit that I could not take another day of seeing her hurt. She is such a charming, beautiful, caring girl that did not deserve all this hate and anger. She deserve someone who could hold her when she was sad, someone that could laugh whit her, someone that could make her smile when her world was crashing down.

"You will never guess what happened!" She slowed to a jog as she neared me. I could see the happiness pouring out of her. Her skin took on a radiant glow and her lips formed into a genuine smile.

"What did he take you back?" I asked in a flat tone. I was angry to put it simply. After all that I did for her she ran off and just took him back. After all that heartache she took him back in 15 minutes flat.

"No," Her head turned to the ground and I saw some of her joy leave. And instantly I felt guilty, but an underlying of delight went along with it.

"Really?" I knew she would not lie about this - not to me, but I still had to ask.

The joy lit her face once again and I knew my angry outburst was forgiven. "He wanted to, but I-I'm... over him." As I beamed down at her she began to jump up and down like a teenage girl. Her curls bouncing up and down and her plump pink lips turned into a grin that looked as if it would explode right off her face.

My body reacted before my I told brain to and my arms surrounded her model like body into a hug. She fit in my arms perfectly. I burrowed my face in her neck taking in her lavender scent. My heart raced from the close contact. I exhaled and felt her shudder into me causing me to smile wider. I wanted to hold her closer but there was not more space between us. So, I began to swing her back and forth celebrating with her.

There was no other place I wanted to be. No other place that caused me so much joy. No other place that I felt like I belonged. No other place, only with my arms around Missy's. I don't see how I did not realize it before.

Reluctantly I put her down. Now that I realized that I was consumed by her, I did not know how to act. I shuffled my feet feeling like I was a school boy again.

"Would you like to celebrate with me?" She took a step closer and her body faintly touched mine as she looked up into my eyes. A humming sensation spread out from where he body heat mixed with mine.

"And where might this party be?" I asked trying to keep my cool. All I wanted in that moment was to ravish her mouth with mine.

"Well, Do you have any ideas?" She was asking me. To tell you the truth I wanted to take her up to my room and make her scream my name, but now that I had this different feeling about her I did not know how to go about a 'celebration'.

"Well, babe, we can go up to my bedroom..." I could not stop the words. I was saying what I was thinking - a problem I have always had.

She gave a girlish giggle and pressed the entirety of her body against mine. I could feel her firm breast push up against my chest and I nearly melted as she ran her dainty index finger along my jaw bone. "As much as I would love to," She joked in a seducing tone, "I was thinking about making a cake. I have been craving some deep chocolate moistness in my mouth for awhile now."

I was never much of a baker, but with Missy I did not see where anything could not be entertaining.

Grabbing my hand before I could answer she was pulling me down the stairs and into the kitchen.

"So where do we start?" I asked as she shuffled around getting mixing bowls, flower, and other cake making goods.

She reached up on her tippy toes stretching to grasp the sugar from the top shelf. She really was not all that short, she stood maybe five foot five, but she still could not grasp the bag of sugar. Without saying a word I strode over pressing my body against her back a little more than necessary reaching up and lifting the sugar onto the counter.

"Thank you," She said in a small voice as a glorious pink shade overcame her face. Did I just make her blush? I liked to think so.

"No problem. Now, where do you need me?" I looked down at the counter where all the equipment lay.

"Well, you can mix while I put the stuff in. Does that sound good?"

"Anything for you, master." I joked picking up the spoon and waiting for her to place the ingredients in.

I did not pay attention to the things she was pouring in because my eyes were fixed on her beauty. The way her soft curls bounced as she hummed her own little tune. The extra skip in her step now that she was finished with the burden of Jace made her shin like the sun. I didn't see how she did not feel my stare, but I am sure she was deep in thought because she would cock her head to the side and bite down on her bottom lip every so often.

"Okay then," She brushed her hand off on her pants, "Now we just have to pour that into the pan and bake. And after that enjoy the taste of our glorious cake." She placed a pan in front of me and I steadily poured the creamy chocolate into it.

She grabbed the bowl from my hand and stuck her fingers right in. "Um," she groaned as I watched her lick the chocolate from her fingers. Her eyes closed and her head tilted back so slightly. My mouth began to water - from other reasons than the chocolate.

"Would you like a taste?" She said holding out the bowl. I grabbed the spoon and licked the back side

without answering her. "Oh, no you don't, that is the best part. I will be having the rest."

A wicked smile came to my face as I lifted it up above my head. "And what would you do for it?"

She frowned causing cute little lines across her forehead. "I am a pregnant woman and you," She poked me in the chest, "are in the way of my chocolate. So, don't let me remind you about earlier today when I made your nose bleed." It was safe to say the joke was on me, but I did not care. I liked it when she got all worked up; it made her so much more attractive.

"Fine..." I mumbled.

We joked the rest of the night until her fatigue form the pregnancy got the best of her and she fell asleep on the kitchen counter while I was cleaning up the dishes. I easily picked her up and carried her to her bedroom. Kissing her forehead and saying a soft 'Good Night' before I left her sleeping.

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YAY! Who is happy that they finally realized they like one another. I know I am. I mean they met way back in chapter 10.... Well around there. Anyways,

Vote, comment, and fan.

Please and thanks.

Chapter 41

The Art of Hope (41)

Chapter 41

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A shooting pain stretched across my chest waking me up with a jolt. I grunted at the soreness knowing that today was not going to be good. My breasts ached as I lifted myself up and gravity took a hold on them. I saw the room in the haze of my sleepy eyes as the sun cast a waterfall of light across my bed.

I just huffed and slid back under the covers not in the mood to get up yet. As my eyes fluttered closed my thoughts floated to last night. Last night was one of the best nights I had had here in Tesoro di Gioiello. I

could not help but to notice the way he looked at me. His eyes hardly ever leaving my face, but I never made a move to let him know I saw. I enjoyed the way my heart raced just from his gaze. How had I not seen this before? This attraction that Eric and I shared. Yes, Eric's attraction may be totally physical but an attraction was still there. Instantly, my thoughts flashed to when he pulled me into his arms and lightly swung me, the way his warm breath caressed my neck, and how I longed to be there again. My eyes, growing heavy, led me off into another sleep where dreams of Eric holding me blossomed into pure need.

"Missy." A soft whisper came just inches from my ear and a light shake at my shoulder. "Missy, it is 12:47. I think it is time to get up." His accent thick and sincere.

Inhaling through my nose Eric's scent overwhelmed my scenes. As much as I loved his presents, I was just not in the mood. I wanted to be alone and just feel sorry for myself. "Go away." My voice groggy from sleep.

"Missy, you have missed breakfast and lunch." The thought of food made my stomach churn.

"Go away," I whisper screamed.

"Missy you need to eat." Anger flooded through me at the fact that he would not just go away. I could feel the tears well up from the frustration I was feeling.

"I'm not hungry, Eric. Just leave me alone." Even I could hear the tears in my voice.

His hand rested on my shoulder and his thumb rubes sweet circles, "What's wrong?" I could not help but have a tear slide down my cheek.

"Please, go away, Eric." I could hardly understand myself.

"I am not going anywhere until you tell me what is wrong." I felt the bed depress where his weight rested.

"I don't know." I cried softly, because that was the truth. I had no clue why I was crying. Everything was going just right but all I could do was think about the bad things.

"Come here." Eric spoke softly as not to upset me more, then pulled me into his bulky arms.

I softly cried as he rocked me. "You have to let me know what's wrong, Missy." I griped tightly at his shirt.

I don't know really why he cares, but at the moment I did not care and I let all my worries run from my lips. "I'm sleepy, my breasts hurt like hell, I can't even think about food without wanting to throw up, I miss Annie, I miss my sister, and I want to go home." I let a little sob slip at the end. I knew, full and well, I sounded like a child, but I did not care.

"Missy, you are home." He ran his hands through my hair and if I was not in such a state it would have taking my breath away.

"Eric, think about it. My father hates me, Jace has abandoned me while I am carrying his child, and Emily, my only girlfriend here, was his mistress. This is just a place for me to stay. There is no love here for me." I was lonely. That was the cold, hard, bitter truth but I was not about to let him see all of that weakness.

"The King loves you, Missy. You know that. Give him some time." He was right but it did not settle that ache and longing I had to have someone with me that loved me and now.

"I feel so alone." I whimpered. Something I said must have hit a nerve because he was setting me back on the bed and leaving without a word.

I was so stupid. I realized just last night that I am falling for him and then the next morning I pushed him away. I set out to find Eric; it was time I apologized. For what, I was not quite sure, but I knew I had done something wrong.

I decided to make a stop by the kitchen to get some food, because Eric was right again - I was hungry.

The second I stepped in the kitchen I regretted it. There stood my father taking a long sip of coffee. His eyes landed on me and then went straight to my tummy. What did he expect? I was only 8 weeks along; not far enough to have a belly bump.

"How are you this morning?" I was dumfounded, my father was speaking to me for the first time in 3 days.

"What brought this on?" Still a little snappy from my break down earlier, I could not help but ask.

"Missy, I am so sorry. Someone made me realize that you and my grandchild are more important than any Kingdom." Tears pooled in the corner of my eyes and I cursed my hormones.

"It 's okay dad, I am mad at myself too." And it was true. I sometimes hated that I took that next step so soon.

"Missy, nothing is more wonderful than a blessing of a child. Don't let the fact that the father is not around change that. I am here to help you, and so are others. You just have to find the right people." He pulled me into a huge and I felt loved again. Because of that love I was feeling my break down felt even more uncalled for.

"Dad, do you know where Eric is?"

He gave me a smile that said 'I know you like him' and said, "Well, when he is upset he goes to the work-out room. Just fallow the load music."

"Thanks dad." Before turning to leave I placed a sweet kiss on his stubbly cheek.

"Oh, and Missy, I have postponed the coronation ball. I think it best for you to worry about your child first."

I sighed, because truly I did not want to rule a Kingdom anymore; I wanted to raise a family, but I loved it here too much. "Thank you, dad."

I found Eric right where father said he would be. His back turned towards me and his biceps flexing as he lowered the weights down and back up again. Muscles rippled like the sea on his arms and a light sweat mad his skin glisten. My breath was firmly hitched in my airway, nothing would go in and nothing would come out. He was beautiful, breathtaking - perfect. And I praised god that those arms had been wrapped around me more than once, while also praying that this morning was not the last.

I could tell he was upset by the way he fiercely lifted the weights up and the grunts that echoed the room. Taking another step in, his face came into view. It was set into a stern scowl and his eyebrows pulled

together as he mumbled angry words to himself. What had I done?

"Eric," I spoke softly so not to anger him further. His eyes snapped to me and then back to the cream painted wall. "Eric, please listen to me," I begged feeling another cry coming on.

"So that I can hear you complain about having no one? All the while I sit there holding you? No, Missy, I am done." By this time he had put the weights down and was staring into my eyes full on and the sadness there almost knocked me down.

Tilling my head down I whimpered, "I am so sorry. I don't know what got into me." Truth was I knew what was wrong - pregnancy hormones, but I did not want him to think I was making excuses for myself.

He did not answer and I did not look up. Guilt was consuming the very inner workings of my body causing my knees to go weak, or maybe it was the fact that I had entirely forgotten to eat.

I realized he was not going to say anything so I started up again, "I understand I don't have any right

to think you would forgive me, but the offer still stands no matter what. I am sorry and I just want to thank you - you know, for being the only one that picks me up when I am down." A tear slid down my cheek for the second time today.

"Aw, fuck Missy! Come here you over hormonal girl." And my wish to God came true as he pulled me into his sweaty arms. "You know how hard it is to stay angry with you when you cry like that?" He chuckled.

My cheeks flooded with heat and I pulled away sharply. I never meant to guilt him into forgiving me. After the heat left my face I looked back up into those unforgettable silver-grey eyes. Those eyes I have grown to love.

"I know just what a pregnant women needs. Come with me." He grabbed my hand and pulled me out of the workout-room. I had to almost run to keep up with his long legs.

"Eric, no offence or anything, but how do you know what a pregnant women needs?" I joked at him.

"Okay, so I may not know what a pregnant women needs but I know what you need." He gave me a dangerously flirty wink and my knees gave way a little. If he only new that it was him that I needed.

He took me to the kitchen and made me a turkey sandwich. "Now, you stay here and I will get your surprise ready."

"A surprise?" I loved surprises I just hated waiting for them.

"Yep," his lips formed a line as he popped the 'p' causing little dimples to form on the side of his mouth. And it added to is adorableness that his accent made him sound almost like a child.

"Okay..." I did not know how to feel about Eric giving me a surprise.

He scurried away as I dove into my turkey sandwich. I could not hold in a moan form the taste. What can I say; the man can make a hell of a sandwich. As I ate, I thought. Mainly about Eric and how he had become the center of my thoughts lately. How I dreamed of him holding me. How I wanted so bad for him to

scoop me up and carry me to his room and do naughty things to me all night long, but that could also be from the hormones floating around in my body.

Eric was back in the kitchen as I was cleaning up my dishes and going for a slice of cake we made last night. I dove my fork into the moist cake and relaxed at the taste it caused in my mouth.

"You wouldn't mind sharing would you?" He asked leaning around my shoulder. His abs pressed into my back just as they had the night before and I revealed in the feel of him toughing me - I wanted more.

Lifting up the fork full of cake I feed it to him. A flake rested on the corner of his lips and I turned to rid him of it. My fingers grazed the soft skin there and my lips parted in need of the taste. The seconds past in minutes as time stood still and I lean forward just a small fraction.

He pulled back slowly, "I think it's time you saw your surprise." He smile awkwardly from our little moment and pulled me up the stairs.

"You really don't have to do anything." What had I done to deserve any of this anyway?

"Trust me, it's nothing. And you put up with me when I was such an ass back when you first got here. Let's just call this a sorry present."

A shy smile broke along my lips, "I never did mind that side of you, really. It's just I had someone at the time..."

"We're not talking about him anymore. Got it? I don't want you to get all depressed on me, again." Did he just say 'depressed on me, again'? Did he really care that much? I could only hope because I don't think I wanted to go on without him.

"Yes sir." I joked giving him a play punch as he opened my bedroom door.

"Hey now." He said bumping my shoulder with his making me giggle. Then he quickly moved behind me and closed his hands over my sight.

"What are you doing?" I dare not even try to fight him for two reasons. One, he was taller and could

take me down with ease, and two, because I rather liked him touching me.

"It's a surprise." I could hear the smile on his face through the accent of his voice.

He shuffled me forward and stopped taking his oversized hands off of my face. I kept my eyes closed trying to soak up the feeling of his fingers touching me.

"Missy, open your eyes." His warm breath fanned over my neck and I shivered from it. What was this man doing to me?

I was greeted with a dark bathroom. Candles lighting what was blocked out from the widow-shade. Soft bubbles overflowed from the tube and the smell of lavender hovered to my nose. He had run me a relaxing tub - one of my favorite things in this world.

"Oh, Eric!" I squealed. I jumped up and hugged him closely to my body. I brought my lips to his ear. "Thank you so much."

He left and I undressed. I was tempted to call him back in here. I was tempted to let him do those

naughty things that my body urges for. I was tempted, but I did not.

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

There you go more Eric and Missy time! I do hope you enjoyed. I know I enjoyed writing it, although it was nowhere near as good as last chapter.

Like always, vote, comment, and fan.

Chapter 42

The Art of Hope (42)

Chapter 42

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

"Annie, I am in love with Eric!" And it was true. Eric and I spent almost every moment together in the past week and I wanted more.

"What?" She shouted into the phone. "The man that wanted you to kill your baby? You have got to be kidding me Missy!" She huffed through the phone.

"No, Annie I really do love him. He is not the man I thought he was. He is... perfect." I sighed dreamily into the phone.

"Oh, fuck, Missy, What in the hell have you got yourself into?" Annie was disappointed in me, but why would I care?

"Annie, don't be like that. He is... well there really isn't a word for him. He has been with me through this whole thing. He does the littlest yet sweatiest things for me all time."

"Just don't get hurt. You have a baby to take care of now." She was right but what could I do to help it.

"I am doing the right thing, Annie, I just know it. Just last night we were in my room and he was reading up on some USA economic plan agreement, and I said I was hungry. Before I could even get up he was out the door getting it for me." I could hear Annie on the other side letting out an 'aw' like sound.

"Did he really?" Her voice was full of giddy happiness.

"Yep, and that's not all. Last week I was feeling down he ran me a surprise bubble bath. And this Wednesday he made sure I had the last piece of cake.

A cake that we made together, might I add." Her girlish giggles tickled my ears.

"Aw, Missy, that is so cute. He totally likes you!" That sentence is why I called her - I was unsure.

"Do you think? I just don't know because he hasn't made a move." I was worried we were just friends.

"Missy, not many men know how a pregnant woman is going to react. He is probably sacred that if he makes a move you will push him away." Logical, I thought to myself.

"Okay, so what do I do?" I was ready for him to know how I feel.

"Well, I would say make the first move. Let him know you want him, and not in a sex way. If you go that way you may just end up with a 'friends with benefits' situation." That was what I was afraid of.

"Okay, so what do I have to do?" I whispered.

"Just drop little hints that say you want a relationship. Flatter him, you know same old same

old." I thought on it. I guess it could work, but Eric was a different kind of man.

"Oh, I have to go. The hubbie is calling me." She never got tired of that word; I only wished that I could do the same.

"Okay, run along now." I giggled as I hung up.

Now that that was over with I had to make a very important call - Jace. It was time I worked out an agreement with him over this child of ours.

I found his cell number in the 'Employee Numbers' booklet. My fingers giving a slight shake as I took in a confident breath and pressed the numbers. Every time it would ring my heart would race a little faster until he answered the phone.

"Hello, this is Jace and you better make it quick I have work to get back to." Good, so we would not have to talk for hours.

I tried to say something but nothing came out. I took in another breath and my heart slowed just a fraction. "Jace, I just wanted to let you know that the baby is doing just fine and that I will not get back

with you but I will let you be the father." I just laid it out there flat not wanting going to monkey around about it.

"And how am I supposed to be a good father if I am not married to the mother?" How dare he use the word marriage with me now! What did I ever see in this man?

"It will work out, Jace, I am in no way going to keep our child away from you. If you have forgotten I was kept away from my father. I know I would rather have a dad around and not married to my mother than no father at all." I huffed fiercely. Just talking to him made my blood boil now.

Eric picked that moment to enter my room. Shit, he does not want me to have anything to do with Jace and I was not about to let him know I was speaking to him.

"Listen I have to go. Call me when you stop being such an ass." I whispered softly before hanging up.

"Hey, so I was thinking we tan today? Well, you tan and I'll sit with you reading up on this thing." He held

up a book. It was the 'USA Economic Plan Agreement' book he has been reading for days.

"Sounds good to me just let me put on my swimsuit." I ran into my wardrobe and put on the little red bikini and grabbed some tanning oil. This was his favorite suit, I knew because he would watch me intently when I wore it. I got just the reaction I wanted when I stepped out of the closet. Eric's eyes roamed over me freely as I acted as if I did not know he was looking. Heat would radiate from my body where he would look. Almost like my skin was calling for him, beckoning him to come relieve me of the burn.

We were quiet as we walked to his room. He had the best balcony in the castle. It was large and lit with the morning sun. A light breeze blew my hair over my eyes as we stepped out. The smell of spring was thick in the air and the sun was heating the day into the lower seventies.

Eric plopped down in the chair next to me setting his book aside. He crossed his arms and took hold of the seam of his T-shirt. Before I knew it, I was blessed

with the sight of his finely tone tan chest and abs. They flexed as he lay down on his back and the clear 'V' shape peeped out from his shorts. My fingers began to itch to touch him, my tongue ached to taste him, and even my core longed to feel him.

Shaking away my arousal I began to apply the sun tanning oil. The smell of coconut inflamed my senses as I applied it on my arms and then to my stomach and legs. I rolled over onto my stomach and stretched out turning my face to where I had a full view of Eric, and then untied my back bikini strap so I would not receive an ugly tan line. That's when I realized I had not applied lotion to my back and a wicked thought flooded my mind.

"Eric?" I asked in a girlishly soft voice.

"Yeah?" He did not look up from his studying.

"Could you do me a favor?" Was I really going to ask him? I was having second thoughts, but when I imagined his dense, long, tanned hand massaging my back I had to ask.

"Sure, what do you need?" He placed his finger in this book and glanced over at me. His eyes took in my open back. I shyly smiled. When he looked at me like that I felt as if I was back in High School with my first boy friend, and my first 'love'. Butterflies erupted in my stomach and tingles shot to my fingertips. The urge to just blurt out an 'I love you' was so strong I had to close my mouth.

After recovering from my almost outburst I held up the bottle of sun tan lotion. "Could you get my back?" His eyes darken with pure lust and I knew he was thinking intently on carrying me to his bed. That was the problem though; I wanted more than just a sexual relationship with Eric. I wanted the whole thing - kids, a house, a honeymoon, and even sit down family dinners.

"Um, Yeah sure," cautiously he padded over to me and gently removed the lotion bottle from my hands.

Anticipation grew within me as I could hear the squeezing of the bottle. I was being impatient, to say the least, and I wanted his warmth to be mixed with mine. The entirety of my body relaxed as the faintest

of fingertips brushed over my back. I let out a content breath of air smiling into the sun. His hands trailed up to my shoulder blades rubbing soft circles there making my muscles relax and a very small moan to escape my lips. He placed his thumbs on each side of my spin and slowly made his way to my lower back. When they reached his target he massaged deeper causing a deep grunt of satisfaction to escape my lips, but my smile never faltered. I wiggled under his strong grasp not sure if I wanted to turn around and kiss him or just enjoy his touch. Abruptly, he pulled away making me frown; I never wanted him to stop.

Aggravated I glared at him as he did a boyish shuffle with his feet. "Um, I am going to wash off my hands. Do you need anything?"

Only you, I thought in my head. "No, I am fine, and thank you." Soon he had become his usual self and gave me another one of his flirty winks.

"Anytime you need a rub down babe, I'm your man." This man had me smitten and the blush on my face showed it to the world.

"Well, next time I'll make sure I give you a call, babe." It was a joking statement but it was the truth - I did not want any other man to touch me.

He gave me another wink turning away.

"Who were you on the phone with this morning?" Eric's voice echoed from the bathroom.

"Annie." I half lied. There was no way I was telling him I called Jace. That was a fight I did not want to have with Eric.

"You were telling Annie, your best friend, that she was being an ass?" He asked as he walked back on the patio. I almost told him that she was not my best friend and that he had filled that spot, but I did not want to have to explain how much I really needed him.

"Yeah," I had to turn my head because I am the worst liar in the world.

"Don't lie to me!" I could tell he was getting irritated with me.

"I'm not." I could hear the panic in my own voice.

"You called him didn't you? Missy, I told you just leave him. You don't need him. He is only going to cause you problems." Even though I was not looking at him I knew his face was turning a faint red color and his eyebrows were pulling together.

"Eric, I don't need him but this baby needs a father, and I have no right to take that from Jace." I whimpered.

"After what he did to you he has no right to even see the child." Here I was pushing Eric away again when all I wanted was to pull him close.

"I am not punishing this child for it." This was something Eric would never understand - not having a parent.

"That child doesn't need a father like Jace around." I could feel the waves of frustration vibrating off Eric.

"What if it was your child, Eric? It would not be fair to you if this situation was different." My voice pleading with him to understand.

He sighed heavily, "Missy, if I was the one I would have never cheated on you." I know we were

speaking hypothetical, but I could not help the feeling that he was promising he would never hurt me.

I didn't have anything to say and so it was silent for a while before I heard his bedroom door close. He had left and it was my fault, again.

I did not see Eric the rest of the day or night, for that matter, and because of it I could not sleep. It was now 2:33 A.M. and I had not even been able to close my eyes without thinking I had screwed my chances over with Eric.

Deciding I would go smooth things over with him I set out in my baggy T-shirt. The soft plush carpet under my feet relaxed me a little, or maybe it was the fact that I was going to see him. I had a feeling it was the second.

Light poured out from under his door and I wondered what he was doing up so late. Knocking on the door, I realized that the sight of him would calm every worry I was feeling. Light consumed the hallways as I took in his presents. His eyes were puffy, hair was in disarray, and his boxers crumpled

from a sleepless night. And I thought the sun hitting his tanned skin was breathtaking. Boy was I wrong.

"Hey," I spoke softly not really knowing what to say all the while I relaxed at the sight of him.

"Are you okay?" His worry was heartwarming.

"I'm fine. Just could not sleep." His stance took on a more relaxed mood, as if before he was ready to jump into action if something was wrong.

"Welcome to the club." He said as he stepped aside and I slid past him.

He grabbed his book off the bedside table and sat in a chair on the far side. "You can have the bed; It looks like you are about to fall over from exhaustion." Without a word I curled up into his bed taking in the way it smelled just like him.

"You know, I don't want to take your bed from you. I don't mind sharing." I wanted to beg him to come over but again, that would be awkward.

"I'm fine, truly." Rejection flooded though me and I wanted to run away.

"Now, I feel bad." I had taken his bed away and he was setting in an oversized chair reading.

"Don't be. You will get more use out of it than I would." He never did look up from his book, as if not sleeping was an average thing for him.

"Eric, I think you should try to get some sleep." I propped myself up with an elbow.

At that he looked at me. It was the first time I noticed how tired he looked. He looked like he had not slept in days maybe even weeks. "I don't do that thing you call sleep."

"Okay, then, maybe you can just sit over here and keep me company?" My shy voice was back.

He took in my puppy dog eyes and jutted out lips before shrugging out of the chair and coming over to me. I happily shuffled over giving him some room. After getting situated in he picked up his book again.

"Now, first off. It is easier to go to sleep when you actually try." Grabbing the book from his hands and throwing it across the room, I spoke in a sassy tone. "Secondly, you have to lie down and just relax." I

rolled around to my side with my head resting on his scent induced pillow. I looked up at him with playful eyes.

"Fine." He rustled down under the covers crossing his arms over his chest. How he accomplished looking like a child, I had no clue.

"Why can't you sleep?" I asked, drinking up his perfection.

"I don't know, I just never have been able to sleep." It worried me that he acted as if it was nothing.

"I'm sorry." I yawned.

Chuckling he pulled the covers over my shoulders, "Don't worry about it, babe."

Closing my eyes it was not long before I was in that state of almost sleep. I cuddled into him just wanting to be closer, and not carrying if he was still awake. I drifted off to dream land but not before I felt his arm wrap around me.

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Okay so.... What do you think? Like the Eric and Missy time? Well, there is more to come! ;)

Like always, Comment, vote, and fan

Chapter 43

The Art of Hope (43)

Chapter 43

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The morning sun flooded my room lighting the soft skin of Missy's face. Her lips were turned into a frozen small smile. I could not understand the strange feeling I got when she would pulled me closer with her arm that was wrapped around my middle. Sometime around 5:00 a.m. she had laid her head on my chest and I began running my fingers though her hair. Now, two hours later, I was doing the same thing. I could get used to this, I thought in my head. I could get used to gazing at her while she slept.

I let my fingers run over her face lightly. Just touching her had a flush heat feeling running through my body. Taking a chance I slid my thumb along the soft skin of her lips, it was untouchable ground when she was awake.

So many times the past week I wanted to touch her, kiss her, make glorious love to her, but I didn't want to push her. She had just gotten over Jace. But yesterday she nearly drove me over the edge. I almost lost control when I felt the soft skin of her back under my hands. When she let those soft grunts of contentment escape her lips I wanted to massage deeper and deeper giving her anything that would make her happy. Then again last night when she came running to my room in just an oversized T-shirt and the evidence of no bra. I wanted her so bad, but it was different than before - I wanted ALL of her. This was the first time I have felt this way about the opposite sex - she was more to me than a bed buddy. And the fact that she trusted me enough to come to me for help left my heart throbbing.

The shirt she was wearing was scrunched up showing her dark purple bikini cut underwear and her not yet showing baby belly. I wondered in amazement, again, at how she could love something from a person that had done so much wrong to her. I did not want Jace to be around, I did not want him to be the father of this child, because he was a low life asshole. What did he do to be worthy of her?

I traced her jaw line with the back of my hand because touching her calmed my nerves. She stirred making me quickly pull my hand away. She took in a deep breath in through her cute button nose and that smile grew more. The sight of her happy made me giddy with joy. Tilting her head up our eyes met, hers glazed over with sleepiness.

"Good morning." She yawned and gave me a crooked grin taking my breath away.

"Good morning." I smiled back down at her glad that she still had not let go of me.

She stretched her legs and they brushed mine reminding me how easy it would be for me to make love to her. The fill of her arm leaving my stomach

brought me back to the moment. I looked down to see where she was going, but was blessed with the fact that she wasn't. She placed both hands on my chest and rested her head on them looking up at me.

A small piece of her light curls fell in her face. I took that chance to touch her seeing as I had a reason. I tucked it behind her ear but instead of taking my hand away I ran it along her jaw again getting the satisfaction when her body did a slight shiver over mine. Taking the tip of my finger I brought her chin to me as I pulled closer. My heart began race worried that she would reject me. What if she only cared for me as a friend? Shaking to worries away I breathed in her lavender scent and it gave me courage. Our faces were so close I felt her breath fan across my lips, warm and inviting. Drawing out the moment I placed both of my hands cupping her face and drinking in the heart melting green eyes that God had blessed her with. My heart stopped and then sent out a skin tingling sore throb as our lips met. I closed my eyes, basking in the greatness of the moment. It was like I had never kissed a girl before, like this was a whole new adventure for the both of us. I pulled

away, not taking another move to deepen the kiss. This was Missy, a classy girl, one with values, one with a baby, one that made me feel a new kind of feeling, and I was not going to mess that up.

When I finally opened my eyes I took in her expression she still had her eyes closed with a grin like a kid in a candy shop. With my hands still cupping her face I ran my thumbs across her cheeks slowly. She smiled wider and her beauty once again took my breath away.

I rested my head back on the pillow letting the bliss of it all run through my veins. But Missy was not having it. She pulled herself up and to my lips again - attacking me. Her hands plunged into my hair and she nibbled on my bottom lips wanting more. I was happy to give her what she wanted and I would always be happy giving her what she wanted, and right now she wanted me. My pride swelled to an overwhelming amount as I rested my hands on her hips still not letting her completely enter my mouth. I quickly took control and nibbled on her bottom lip earning a sweet gasp of happiness from her.

I let my hands massaged her hips and she opened her mouth calling for me. I entered smiling against her lips at the taste. She was breathtaking even in the morning with her hair in a tussle and her breath not quite as fresh. And this stunning creature was with me - of all people.

She pulled away to breathe and I stopped myself from attacking her mouth, again. I had to keep a sound mind on the fact that she had hardly any clothes on and that we were on my bed.

"Let's get you ready and have breakfast on the patio?" I asked.

"Breakfast on the patio?" She smiled ecstatically.

"Yep, you need a change of scenery." She bit on her bottom lip and giggled overflowing with delight. "Now, go get you sexy ass showered and ready, babe." When she jumped off the bed I saw her purple panties giving me a view of her perfectly rounded bum. Jumping up right behind her I gave it a slap and quickly retreated to my bathroom not wanting another bleeding nose.

She had arrived before me because I had to cool myself down in the shower. This girl took my breath away for the third time today when I saw her in that yellow sun dress. It hung lightly on the shoulders and plunged down giving just a little view of her chest. But what really made the dress is how it caused the sun to dance of her tan skin and turning her bright green eyes more inviting.

"Hey!" She yipped running over to me with her curls dancing in the sun.

"Hey, I have the kitchen cooking us up some bacon, eggs, and muffins. Is that all right with you?" I asked itching to take her hand in mine, but I was not sure where we both stood at the moment.

"Oh, that sounds so good!" She danced over to the table and sent me a questioning look when I did not fallow. I was just too caught up in her, again. "Have babe, are you going to just stand there and make goo goo eyes at me all day or are you going to eat with me?" She giggled but her statement was a dilemma I was having inside my head.

"Maybe you should not wear such promiscuous clothing and I would not get distracted by you sexy ass." I know good and well that I was being rude but I just love seeing her face turn that red color when I talked dirty to her.

She marched up to me with a determined smile pulling her lips to my ear. "I don't understand why now you are eye raping me when I was just in your bed not even an hour ago with only two articles of clothing on." She whispered softly before turning and giving her step a little more swing on her way back to the table.

Before I made my way to the table the food was placed out and Missy was wafting the air with that smile on her face again.

Sitting down I grabbed a muffin filling my plate full. "Did you ever get any sleep last night?" Her voice was soft as if it was a touchy subject.

"Maybe an hour or two, but someone thought it important to throw themselves on me." I smirked because in all actuality it was easier for me to sleep when she was there.

Her face turned a bright red and she look down at the plate breaking my eye contact with her green eyes. "Sorry," she mumbled.

Chuckling I reached over placing my large hand over her small one. The tingles shot through my body cause me to relax a small bit. "Don't you dare be sorry! I am the one that should be sorry. I went off on you for no reason yesterday. I just hate it when you talk to Jace, he should be forgotten." Her eyes pulled back up to mine.

"Eric, I know you are just looking out for me, and I can't tell you how much that means to me. But, Jace is the father and he has a right to be informed. Trust me if I had my way I would never speak to him again." Her emotions where flat and non-existing but I could see the hurt she was still feeling.

Desperate to change the subject I asked the first thing that came to mind. "So, how are you feeling about running the place one day?" Even though I cared for Missy very much, the jealousy that it was going to be hers pulsed through my body.

She turned her head back to her plate suddenly interested in the food. "Missy, Why won't you answer me?" Aggravation bubbled up in me - something in me hated that she still kept secrets form me. I wanted to know everything about her.

"Eric, I don't want it. I don't want to run a Kingdom. I know nothing about it, and I just want a family. But I love it here. I love everything about it." Her eyes once again locked with mine, "And I love the people." It was just a statement, I told myself. But there was something so intimate in her eyes I got a strange feeling running through my body. "I want you to take over."

"What?" She wanted to give me what I wanted with no questions asked.

"You heard me. I know how bad you want it. You love this Kingdom and I can't take that away from you. Plus, this isn't me. I want a family, a husband, and well, all that other stuff." There was the girl in front of me with all the spunk it takes to be a leader, with the genetics to change the world, and she was giving it to me because she had someone else's baby.

"I will not let you give it to me just because you are pregnant, Missy. As much as I want it I will not let you do it." I stood pointing my finger on the table. She shied away from me and I felt a little guilty for freighting her so I sat back down.

"I don't want it. And it is not because of the pregnancy. I just want to live here and do little things to change the world." It was her turn to rest a hand on mine and again the touch calmed me to the core. "This is rightfully yours, Eric, and you know that." Our eyes meet and she did not look away.

"Sir, the King wants to discuss your trip to the USA." A maid came in smashing the moment to bits.

"Your leaving?" Missy's voice came panicked.

Giving her a soft smile, "Only for a week and you have two weeks to prepare yourself before my absence." I winked at her but her lips still turned into a sad pout. Sheer bliss flooded in me - she did not want me to go. Me of all people in this world she leaned on, she trusts, she wants to stick around. "Aw, Missy. Don't look like that I won't be gone long."

"I know. But you're the only friend I have here anymore. Other that Mike and Tony but they are off designing the summer house." Her head tilted to the ground.

Getting up out of the chair and crouching down beside her chair. I pulled her chin in my direction. "Missy, would it make you feel better if you could come along?" Her eyes brightened.

"Can I?" Her voice hopeful.

"I will ask." I said standing up and turning towards the King's office.

"Eric!" Missy yelled from behind me. As soon as I turned a blur of yellow was thrust at me and skinny arms were around my neck. "Thank you." She whispered in my ear.

Wrapping my arms tightly around her waist, I whispered "You're welcome."

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So that was THE chapter! Did the kiss happen the way you wanted it to? Personaly I loved the way it

happened. But of course, I am the writer so it won't change back it you didn't! :P haha

Like always, Vote, Comment, Fan. :D Maybe even tell a friend..... ;)

Chapter 44

The Art of Hope (44)

Chapter 44

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

There comes a time when one needs to sit back and reflect. A time when one must let go of the hate and hurt they feel toward a person. A time for one to completely move on. There was nothing that had stopped the angry feelings I had toward Jace. He had lied and he had cheated, but in a strange way, I did not care. He could have his Emily, he could have his job, and he could even have a part in his child's life. But I, Mary Elizabeth Princess of Tesoro di Gioiello,

was over him. I was free to move on with my life not burdened with the heartache or the pain.

And it was easy to point out the soul reason I had moved on - Eric. Yep, it was the man standing right in front of me. It was the man who was currently burning my meatloaf in the oven as he spoke to me about our plans to go to America.

"Eric?" I said in a sly voice.

"Yep Babe?" He said smiling up at me. I swung my legs while sitting on the counter, drinking in his handsome face.

"You're burning my meatloaf." I said calmly - I could care less about the meatloaf. I was the one getting the attention.

"Oh Shit," He jumped into action. Pulling on an oven-mitt and slamming the door open. He did a strange skip-hop-jump as he tried to avoid burning himself earning a giggle from me. "Fuck," he hissed as the practically threw the pan on the counter across from me. I laughed fully this time not caring to hold it in.

"Shit, that stupid oven burnt my arm." He growled pulling off his oven-mitt.

"Aw, Come here." I cooed as he trudged over to where I sat. A pouty face firmly planted on his features. When Eric was close enough I pulled on his hand positioning him between my legs in order to get a good look at the damage. There was a small red line on his forearm about the length off my pinky. It was not even deep enough to need medicine. A little cool water and tomorrow he would not even remember it. I giggled, "It's not that bad. It will be gone by tomorrow. All it needs is some cold water."

"Whatever babe, this thing is going to scar." Again I laughed, the way only Eric could make me laugh.

"Yeah, right I have had worse." I said slapping his 'uninjured' arm.

"Really?" He pulled himself away from me in order to run water on his little burn. What a baby.

"Yep," I popped the 'p' and began to swing my legs again.

He turned cocking his eyebrow up. His lips turning into a smirk causing my heart to stop just a brief second and sputter back to life. He was breathtaking and I longed for his lips to touch mine again. It had been three days now, three very long days, from the morning he kissed me in his bedroom. And I wanted more.

He took a step closer leaving about a foot between my swinging legs and his devilishly handsome form. "Well, show me. If you think you can be tougher than me, go ahead and show me." He smirked thinking he had one on me. I smirked right back knowing I was the winner this time.

I held out my foot for him to see. I had a web of discolored skin on my left foot - splotches of hideous white skin that only stood out more because of my light tan. I flinched remembering the pain I felt from the burn.

Eric gabbed my foot gently in the palms of his hefty hands softly running his thumbs over my scars. Just the small touch sent my body into overdrive - my heart racing and my lips aching.

"Damn, what did you do?" He whispered in shock running his fingertips along the ugly scars once more. I flinched again and pulled away quickly.

"Nothing," I spoke shyly, regretting even bringing it up. I never really paid attention to the scar anymore. It didn't hurt and the memory of getting it was stored deep in my mind.

His eyes met mine and I turned my attention to the burnt meatloaf quick as lightening. I was ashamed to tell him.

I felt his hand on mine and in an instant all my heartache and sorrow was put on the backburner. "Why do you just close off and let your eyes glaze over? Why won't you tell me?"

I studied the meatloaf hard not wanting to talk about it. "You burnt my meatloaf." I stated flatly.

"Who gives a fuck about the damn meatloaf?" He was getting irritated.

Finally I grew some and brought my eyes to his. Putting on the brightest smile I could muster, "It's nothing, really."

"Missy, This," He lightly grabbed my foot running his hand over the discoloration once more, "is not nothing. And the fact that you will not tell me what happened says it is something big."

I sighed, knowing he was going to win out on this one. "Do I have to tell?" I whined like a child.

"If you want me to stick around, then yes. I hate it when you won't tell me; it keeps my mind wondering." The concern in his eyes was overwhelming - he was going to win.

"It was a pot of boiling water." Stick to the facts, I told myself.

"And..." He dropped my foot and positioned himself between my legs again. My heart raced when his fingers trailed down my cheek.

"My mother," I didn't want to talk about it. I just wanted to leave it alone. The memory was one from my childhood that I worked very hard to forget - and most of the time, I succeeded.

"Your mother?" He whispered in disbelief. This is where the damn pity came into play. This is where

our relationship, if that's what it was, ended because he felt sorry for me. I wanted to run and hide.

"Yep, okay. End of story. Let's find something to eat now that the meatloaf is ruined." I hastily answered trying to slide from his grasp and failing. His bold hands held me steadily in place.

Pulling his hands up to cup my face his eyes searched mine. "What did she do to you?" It was not a forced question; it was not a wondering question. No, it was not really a question at all. It was as if he saw the hurt that my mother had left upon me. A hurt that I thought I was already over.

"She didn't mean it, really. She was just... not herself that day." Truth was she was having withdraws.

"Babe, you should talk about this. It is obviously hurting you." His words sincere and I had a longing to tell him my whole life story.

Taking in a deep breath and studying his plain white t-shirt, which made his tan stand out even more, I put the words simple as possible. "She had lost all her money and could not afford her 'fix' for the day. I was

the butt end of her anger. I just happen to ask the wrong question and next thing I know a pot of boiling water was thrown at me."

I did not even have time to calculate his expression because in that moment his lips were on mine. The force of his touch driving me to freeze in my stance as my heart stopped and my blood sent off a burning fire of passion. It only took a second for him to realize I did not respond. Little did he know, it was because I was happy, overjoyed, delighted. Before he pulled away I was smashing myself to him tangling my hands in his hair and nibbling on his soft, spicy flavored, bottom lip. He responded beautifully by placing his enormous hands back on my hips and rubbing his tongue across my lips. I sighed happily as I let him enter. His taste incredible, his hands warm and comforting, and his body inviting, but what mattered most was he cared.

Breathing became a need and so I broke away unwillingly. His taste still thick in my mouth all the while his hands still firmly placed on my hips. I could not stop the smile from forming on my face. All it

took was a kiss and my worries and heartaches once again forgotten. There were no words to describe the way he was making me feel. I rested my head on his chest and pulled lightly at his white shirt admiring his smell and beauty. I love him. I knew I was rushing my feelings, and that alone scared the life out of me, but with Eric my life felt as if it had meaning. Like I was pulling out of a dark tunnel and feeling the sun on my skin for the first time.

My stomach picked that very moment to grumble in hunger - how cliché. Feeling Eric's chest rumble with a deep chuckle my lips pulled into a wider grin.

Rubbing his hands up my back he muttered ever so softly, "How about I take you out for dinner?"

I froze in happiness, and his hand stopped its comforting motion. He was asking me out. Eric, the jerk yet sweet as cotton-candy boy, was asking me, little ole Missy, out. I was giddy with joy wanting to jump up and down like a love sick teenager. Holding my composure I answered calmly as possible, "I would love to." And his hand went back to running up and down my back.

_ _ _ _ _ Eric's POV_ _ _ _ _

We were to meet in the lobby at half past six, and it was now 6:49. She was late, and my nerves were jumping about my body causing my breath to come in short gasps. I cursed myself for my schoolboy nerves. She wouldn't stand me up, would she? No, that was not Missy. That was below her.

I rerolled my cuffs and made sure my black dress pants were crinkle free. A soft cough forced me to glance up. There she stood in all her glory. This girl was beautiful in her red flowing dress - tight at the top enhancing her curves and flowing out at the bottom as they rested against her finely tuned legs, which were only sexier with the four inch red pumps. Her curls pulled up into a complicated bun and pieces falling around her oval face. Her green eyes sporting a twinkle and her lips pulled into a shy small smile. She was the most beautiful creature I had ever seen.

"You look beautiful." I breathed still taking in the radiant glow bouncing off of her.

"Thank you," She blushed, "You don't look so bad yourself." She joked letting a comfortable aura drape over us.

"Should we go then?" I asked making sure she was ready.

As I took her hand my nerves drifted away into nothingness she tangled he fingers in mine, "Sorry I made you wait. I never knew how hard it was to get ready for something like this, and Tony and Mike being out of town made it all the worse." She smiled up at me and I had the urge to kiss her.

"It was worth the entire wait, babe." I admitted because it was true. Looking at her I wonder what I saw in all those other girls; the one holding my hand was a Goddess washed with beauty that could hurt the very eyes of the onlooker. But sadly, impregnated by another man.

"So, where are we headed?" She asked trying to act as if I was not staring at her. I cursed myself for making her feel uncomfortable.

"Out to eat. Just a little Italian restaurant." I shrugged. The maids opened the doors for us and I let her go through first, but not letting her hand go. It's funny really, all my life I had heard that when you find THE woman everything she did made you nervous, but right now all I had to do was touch her and everything felt right - perfect in almost every way. I was feeling the nerves, not all the time, so did that mean I just liked her?

When I looked back over to her, she had her eyes locked on our intertwined hands, smiling. She wanted this, she wanted me to hold her hand, and she liked it. I could hardly keep myself at such a slow pace from the excitement I was feeling. When had I become such a pussy? Even if I am one, I am happier at this moment than I have ever been in my whole life.

The limo ride was quiet as if now that we were on a date we did not know what to do with ourselves. Well, I knew what I wanted to do. I wanted to kiss her, touch her, and learn every scare along every little story that created the indention of it. I wanted

to make her laugh so hard she would cry, to make her smile so wide her cheeks would hurt in the morning, to make her so happy she would not be able to contain it.

The driver pulled up to the little restaurant, "Semplicemente Fantasia" translating to Simply Fantasy. Before the drive could open the door I was out holding my hand for Missy to take.

She gladly took it giving a genuine smile to me; I gave her one right back. I watched her carefully as we entered the small restaurant that only had about fifteen tables and a small dance floor. When her eyes widened at the old fashion décor and the softly lit lights I knew I had gained some brownie points.

Resting her thin fingers on her heart she finally spoke, "Eric, It's lovely."

Taking her hand in mine I lead her to a table in a secluded area. I was Prince around here so the waiters would just have to suck it.

It took no time for the waiter to bring out the breadsticks, and still no words were said between

Missy and me. A watched her closely take the seasoned bread and rip of a tiny piece before gently placing it on her tongue. I inwardly chuckled, "You do know I have seen you eat before, so you don't have to act so proper." I had seen her stuff her face with cake; it happened to be one of the cutest things I had ever seen in my life. I smiled at the thought.

Her face turned red, "Do you really think I act this way for you?" She asked sarcastically giving a giggle at the end. Even though it was a low blow, on her part, I could not help but beam at her - she was breathtaking. She leaned in motioning for me to do the same, "It's the people. They are staring, and I need to watch myself seeing as I am the King's daughter." I wanted very much to smooth out the worry lines on her forehead.

"They are only staring because you seem to have that effect on people. It's not their fault you're so gorgeous." The look on her face was hard for me to identify - something of shock and aw? Then I realized what words I had spoken. Words that were quite true

but the fact that I spoke them caused me to even be shocked.

"Eric, they are women; I don't think they are looking at me." I looked over, and sure enough two girls about the age of fifteen were eating dinner with, what I guessed were, their parents - ogling me.

"No, I think you are sadly mistaken. You have caused them to reconsider what they find attractive." I got just the reaction I wanted.

"Eric, stop being stupid, you know they are checking you out." I detected a small amount of jealousy, and boy did I like it.

"Well, Babe, if I were a women I would have no trouble going gay for your sexy ass." Now this, this was an Eric complement. The complements I knew she secretly loved; I could tell by the way she would roll her eyes just at the same time sport that light blush on her cheeks.

"Sir," The waiter bowed. "Can I get you something to drink?" He asked but his eyes locked on Missy the whole time.

"Yes, I will have a sweet tea." I spat at him. The nerve of the man, could her not see I was the one with Missy? And to top it off, I was the Prince.

"And you miss?" He turned his whole body toward her giving her his full attention. Missy, being the sweet heart that she is, gave him a friendly smile - the one that sent a chill down my spine and made my lips quiver to kiss hers.

"I will have a water, and could you put two lemons in it, please?" She asked giving him another sweet smile.

He turned and left, "You just had to flirt back." I stated blandly a little irritated at her actions.

"What?" Her face turned into one of shock - genuine shock making me instantly feel bad for saying something about it.

I sighed, "Do you know what you do to guys when you smile at them like that?" I left a pause for her to answer but she said nothing. I did not feel like explaining so I let it drop and pick up my menu. She did the same.

"Here you go ma'am. One water, two lemons." He winked and placed it on her table. She did not even look up at him. Although I was thankful that she did not, I felt guilty that I had complained about it. The man waiter seemed to get the hint and placed my tea in front of me. "Are you ready to order?" This time he kept his eyes to himself.

"Yes, I will have the Tortiera di cozze." I said placing my menu back to the table and glancing over at Missy, who was still looking straight at hers'. Guilt washed over me again - I was such an ass.

"And you miss?" He made sure he looked her directly in her eyes - respectfully.

"I would like the um.... Ri- um, Ricei." I watched as she struggled to get the wording right eventually giving up. Her perfectly pink lips jutted into a pout as her eyes pleaded with me to help.

I chuckled, leaning over to where her finger pointed. "She will have the Risi e bisi soup." I said, taking her menu. The waiter left and silence fallowed.

"I'm sorry." I blurted. I'm not one to apologize, but I was also not one to care about a girl. I was also not one to lie to myself, and I knew I had feelings for this girl across from me.

Her eyes brightened and that smile was back on her face. "Don't worry about it, I forgive you."

"We never got around to finishing our plans for America." I stated opening up the conversation with something simple hopping it would lead to something interesting.

"Okay, you said that we will be staying the first three nights in a hotel near the White House?" She asked grinning about something. About what, I had no clue.

"Well, because of security reasons we will be in a secluded cabin - a modern cabin, with TV, games, a dishwasher, and all the necessities. It has three rooms, one for me, one for you, and one for a guard." Her face fell. "What?" I asked worried that she had changed her mind.

The waiter chose that time to appear with our plates. He laid them out, "Can I get anything for the two of you?"

Missy picked up her spoon, "No, I am fine thank you."

"No, I am fine as well." I unrolled my napkin grabbing my fork waiting for him to leave. "What's wrong?"

"It's just... Well, I hate being watched by the guards every second of my life. I can't stand it, Eric." I knew she now had a thing about guards because of Jace. Such a silly thing, for her to give them all a bad name because of him. "I want some free time." She finished before blowing on her soup and sipping at it.

Sighing I contemplated how to rid ourselves of the problem. "We could make them sleep outside." It was really the only solution I could come up with. There was no way the King was going to leave her unprotected - not with her pregnant. I shoveled in some food.

My comment caused her to giggle, "That sounds wonderful. Could we really get them to do that?"

"We can try. But let's not tell your father. I don't think he would approve of us being in the house alone." Her face turned pink, and I knew that her thoughts were going to that night - the night we first met.

"What's the worst that could happen? I'm already pregnant, and I am defiantly not ready for sex yet." I knew she was not ready for sex, but I still wanted it. I was never planning to use the trip to America to get sex, yet I still wanted it. And I wanted it only from her.

A camera flashed to my right forcing me to jump. I was so wrapped up in our conversation that I had no clue that the paparazzi had found us. "Shit," I muttered grabbing Missy's hand and running from the table.

"Sir," the hostess bowed, and let me pass. I knew she would not argue about the check. I was Prince and a check would come in the mail in about a week.

"Eric, I can't run in these heels." Missy yelled from behind me. I stopped in my tracks.

"Do you trust me?" I breathed letting myself scan the area for the guards. I spotted a local pub and instantly knew that's where they would be.

"Um, yeah?" She questioned. That was all I needed. I bent down placing my arm under her knee and another at her back before picking her up and running. She could not be found out. If people found out that she was Princess all hell would break out in the Kingdom. "Eric," She squealed but wrapped her arms tightly around my neck.

"Sorry, babe, but we have been spotted by the paparazzi. I need to get you out of here."

She giggled, "It's not like they are going to kill me. They will just think I am your girlfriend." I froze.

Her words kind of hurt me. "I thought you were?" I asked jokingly, but the truth was I really did. Were we not on a date? That meant we were 'dating,' right?

Her green eyes softened and her lips pulled into a soft caring beam. I felt her finger trail up to my hair forcing me to inwardly grown. "Only if you want me

to be, babe." She copied my voice making her look sexy as hell.

"Oh, I want you to be, babe." With that I kissed her with so much force my knees almost gave way.

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

So.... Tell me what you think?

Thank you, to all my fans. I would be nowhere without you!

Like always, Vote, comment, fan, and tell a friend? Please, and thank you!

Chapter 45

The Art of Hope (45)

Chapter 45

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

To say I was on cloud nine is an understatement, because I was flying in the heavens. Eric, just saying his name maid my heart flutter, Eric and I being a couple, us dating, I still had not wrapped my head around the fact that he wanted a relationship. As far as I have known he has never had a steady girlfriend or even a relationship for that matter. I was his first and could not help that every time I thought of that I did a happy dance.

Skipping down the steps I heard two familiar voices from the kitchen. Knowing right away who it is I ran down the steps and jumped onto one of the tall thin guy's back. "Tony," I screamed as he began to giggle.

"Hey sexy." He said as he tried to shake me off his back. I looked over at Mike giving him a small smile.

The two looked down at me with a strange expression on their faces. Tony crossed his arms and Mike did the same as Tony spoke up, "Do you have something you want to tell us?"

"Nope," I lied. I had no clue what they found out. If it was that Eric and I were now an item or the fact that I have a baby in my tummy.

Mike shook his head as if angry. "Missy, we know, so you may as well just tell us." He shrugged at the end.

"I am not walking into that trap. If you tell me what you know I will gladly feel in all the details." At this point I did not care if the two of them knew. I like Eric, and everyone important knew about the baby. I had nothing to hide.

Tony bent down on his knees and placed a hand on my abdomen. When he looked up at me I gave a bright smile and nodded my head. "I told you Mikie," he used Mike's pet name, "She just has that motherly glow about her." Turning back to me a pulling me into a tight hug. "I am so happy for you dear." I smile into the crook of his neck, happy that someone would celebrate with me. "Now," He placed me back on the ground, "Who is the dad?"

I took in a sharp breath of air. "Jace," I spat breathlessly.

"Oh," Mike said. Of course, they just had to find out. As if everyone around here, besides my father, knowing what Jace had done was not bad enough.

"Missy," It was Tony's voice that brought back the cheerful happiness, "Can we decorate the kids' room?" I giggle at the shyness in his voice.

"Of course," I was happy he had changed the subject so quickly. The last thing I wanted to do was think about Jace.

Mike and Tony both jumped up and down like school girls and it did not take long for me to do the same. "So, how far along are you?" Tony said as he placed his hand back on my stomach.

"Ten weeks and four days," I spoke proudly. Happy to have someone that understood the unknown love that rested between a mother and her unborn child.

"Aw, you don't even have a mommy tummy yet." Mike said as he too placed a hand on my tummy.

"Not yet." I sighed, hopping that the baby bump would soon show. I wanted everything that a pregnancy could bring, but most of all I wanted to be a mother. It did not matter whose baby it was.

Tony had a moment of sorrow in his eyes, and I briefly wondered if it was because he would never have this. That he would never experience the joy of having a child. Just looking at him it was easy to tell he would be a hit with kids. I gave him a small smile and pulled him into a hug, "Would you mind being the godfather?" I whispered into his ear. In the back of my mind I hoped that Mike or Eric did not want

the title. But it was too late to think about that now as Tony pulled me even closer to his body.

"I would love to." If I was not mistaken, his voice cracked at the end.

"Missy?" I heard Eric's husky voice call from the stars.

"What does he want with you?" Mike asked in a snobby tone. I just smiled waiting for Eric to come down the stars. When I pulled away for Tony, the two gave me a wondering look and I smirked.

"Missy?" Eric's voice had a bit of urgency to it and I silently hoped nothing bad had happened. It seemed I was doing a lot of hoping lately.

I saw Eric's tall frame bound around the corner and I instantly relaxed when his eyes met mine. "What did you need?" I asked.

Looking around as if he just now noticed I was with two guys. "I need to speak to you. It's about last night." My heart dropped. Was he wanting to take it back? Did he feel it was a mistake? Worry oozed to

every corner of my being and my palms began to sweat.

As if he noticed my worry he pulled me into a hug and whispered in my ear, "When you get done just come to my room." Baffled I nodded my head like a good girl should. After placing a light kiss on my head he was back up the stairs.

"Do you mind explaining?" Mike asked tapping his foot on the floor and crossing his arms again. Heat rouse up in my cheeks. As Mike's stare was drowning, Tony's jaw was almost to the floor.

"Well," I was cut off by Tony slapping Mike lightly across the face.

"Can't you see that he kissed her on the forehead in front of us?" I didn't fully understand what he was talking about and by the looks of it neither did Mike.

"So," I shrugged.

Shaking his head in disbelief, "What have you done to him? He has never looked at a girl that way before." Understanding flooded within me. Tony saw

that there was something different between Eric and I.

"I think you're asking the wrong question." Mike stated in a calm voice.

"And what is that?" Tony snapped in an offhand tone. As if he always got snippy with Mike.

Shrugging of his attitude Mike answered, "I think the question is, what has he done to Missy?" My face turned bright red - so he had noticed.

"Can I go now? He needs to speak with me." I asked hoping it would get me out of this conversation before it even started.

They both giggled and pushed me gently toward the stars. Was it true? Did Eric really look at me in a way that he had never looked at anyone before? My heart sped just thinking that a fragment of that was true. He was everything I could ask for in a guy. Yes, he had his jerk moments, but lately his sweet ones were out numbering them. I knocked on his bedroom door wondering if I should just walk in.

The door creaked and his silver grey eyes came in contact with mine causing a large dorky smile to plaster itself on my face. "You rang?" I asked when all I really wanted to do was stare into his lovely eyes for another minute.

"Um, yeah." He stumbled with his words. "Look, before you go into freak mode I just want to say everything will be cleared up. I will fix any problems I have caused." The words 'before you freak' had me in a panic. Taking deep breaths I was able to clear all the 'what if's out of my mind.

"Okay, What is this all about?" I asked Eric and for the first time saw how tense he was. Grabbing his hand I towed him to his bed and plopped him down. I just needed to touch him, because that always seemed to help my nerves. Gently I massaged his shoulders feeling him relax under my hold. I could feel the knots in his broad built shoulders and I silently wondered how many years these knots have been building up. Digging my thumbs in deeper his head bent forward and he let out a soft groan of content. While moving my hands to his neck I asked,

"Are you going to answer me?" I could not help but let the smirk grow on my face - I had control over him, for once.

Pulling away he turned to look at me his grey eyes met with mine, and just like that, he had control again because I melted into a warm puddle of Missy from the intensity they held. He leaned in closer, his body over top of mine with his massive arms on either side of me. I took in a sharp, deep breath hoping his lips would come in contact with mine. Inching closer his eyes went to my lips causing my heart to race in an untimely fashion. I wanted to close the distance, to have his soft pink lips murdering mine, to have him nibble on my bottom lip as I ran my hands through his soft hair, to have that burning sensation engulf my whole being, but I did not dare move. His nose racked over my cheek and I felt a hint of said burning passion grow within my heart. Uncontrollably, my head snapped and inch closer to his but I willed it to stop. Eric gave a deep chuckle that did more than make my heart race; it also sent silent chills down my arms. Lightly, so soft I almost missed the electricity, his lips pressed to the

corner of my mouth. I did not even have time to return the kiss as he dashed to the television.

I let my head roll back in defeat. Obviously, he had won and I was drunk off his kiss - if that was even what one would call it. "Babe, you may want to pay attention and stop dreaming about me." He chuckled once more but I could not bring myself out of this daze. If the man only knew what I was dreaming about; I was dreaming his hands were roaming over every inch of my naked body, that he was kissing places that he had only kissed once before, and that he was whispering sweet nothings in my ear. I sighed longingly and forced my eyes open.

He clicked on the television and I saw just what he was talking about. I lady that looked to be in her thirties with long brown hair and perfectly plucked eyebrows began to talk. "It seems Prince Eric Delamater has a new woman in his life." A picture of Eric and I kissing last night, him holding me in his arms, popped up on the screen and I shrieked. "Whoever this beauty is the question still remains, what is he thinking? She is obviously not royalty and

if he plans on taking over the Kingdom he must discard of her." All the sudden a video of the two of us in the restaurant was plastered on the screen. It was of us in beep conversation last night. Eric's head leaning in toward my own head as we talked and laughed. A be fat grin broke into my face. We looked so natural together, almost like we belonged.

"You're smiling?" Eric raised his voice.

"Yeah," I shrugged.

"How can you be happy about this? You are found out!" He searched my eyes as if I was a mad woman. I was mad, for him. I giggled at my corny joke. "God, now you laughing."

"Eric, It's not that big of a deal. I have to 'come out' anyways." I stood making my way to him and wrapping my arms around his neck. I stood on my tippy toes to bring my lips to his ear. I had no such luck until he bent his head down for me. "I had a wonderful time last night." Unwillingly, I pulled away.

"Where are you headed?" He said with a seductive look in his eye.

"Wouldn't you like to know..." I said giving him a wink and running out the door. His thundering footsteps were not far behind me. I gave a frantic giggle as I turned the corner to another hallway.

"Oh no you don't." Eric said as I tried to pick up my pace. It was no us; Eric's legs were so much longer than mine and it was obvious he was in better shape than I. I giggled profusely as his arm came around my waist.

"No," I screamed kicked my legs like a little girl.

"I was not done with you." He chuckled seductively in my ear.

"Well, I was done with you." I stated as blankly as possible.

Pushing me gently against the wall, he gave me a look. This was unlike any look I had ever seen in his eyes. It was not lustful, joking, or even wondering. It was a full blow look of happiness. Eric was truly happy for the first time and the fact that I had

something to do with it made my eyes water. "I was wondering if you would like to have a movie night in my room later? I am going to miss super but I will be back around nine. Is that a good time for you?" He placed both hands on either side of my head boxing me in, again.

Looking off into space I answered, "I think I could pencil you in." I ran my hand down the buttons of his shirt absent mindedly.

"Really?" Sarcasm thick in his voice as his breath fanned over my face.

"Yes, a princess has many things to do in a day. You know, calls to make, dances to learn, dresses that need fitting..." I trailed off running my hand pack up the buttons of his shirt.

"Good," He smirked, "I'll see you then." He turned to leave me but I firmly grabbed onto his collar and pulled him to me. I placed a very light kiss on the corner of his mouth much like the one he gave me earlier, then I simply walked away.

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I knocked on Eric's door for the second time today. I was dog tired and was worried I would not make it through the movie. I had danced for four solid hours trying my best to get the steps down to the waltz. After that I had contacted my mother and Annie that I would be coming over next week. Mother insisted that we stay at her place. I told her I would see what I could do. I was nerves for Eric to meet Annie, my mother and even Katie. I wanted so much for them to like him and for him to love them.

Eric opened the door and smiled down at me causing my heart to beat faster. "Hey," I said sleepily.

He frowned, "You're sleepy."

"Not to sleepy for you." I flirted with him. He just shook his head with a smirk playing on his lips and stepped aside for me to enter.

"You look nice." He stated and I had to look down to remember what I had on. It was a knee high forest green dress that synched right under the breast line giving my C cups a little extra show. I huffed and threw my arms down to my sides. I had forgotten to change from dinner.

"I forgot to change." I complained throwing myself on his bed like I owned the place.

"No need to be a baby, babe. You can borrow one of my shirts." He chuckled ducking into his closet and returning with a solid black T-shirt. "I would loan you some of my shorts but I don't think they would fit your small waist."

I gave him a thank you smile but shook my head. "No thanks my room is just upstairs." I said making my way to the door.

"Oh, come on. It's not like I haven't seen you in only a T-shirt before." He threw it at me and I caught it. "Plus, I need to talk to you and by the looks of it you will not be awake for long." I just stuck my tongue out at him a marched to his bathroom.

Pulling of my shirt I debated taking off my bra as well, but decided against it. I did not want to give him the wrong idea. I left my dress in his floor and pulled the black shirt over my body. It covered most of me coming to about mid thigh, so maybe it was not as bad as I first thought.

When I opened the door Eric was stretched out on his oversized chair. His legs hanging off one side and his head resting against the opposite. I made myself at home on his bed. "What was it you wanted to talk about?" I asked and he turned to me.

"I am not going to be here tomorrow. I am having a guy's day with some friends from back home. I just wanted you to know. You know, now that we are... dating." The world felt foreign coming from his lips, but I liked hearing it very much.

I patted the bed beside me and he quickly made his was over to me, plopping down on his side and pressing the play button for the television. I did not pay attention to what move was one as I snuggled into him and he wrapped a strong arm around me. "I don't mind you going." I didn't, but I still wanted him here - with me.

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Even more Eric time! I am afraid it is getting boring, but I have to build their relationship. Trust me, Next chapter there is a shocker... *evil grin*

Vote, comment, fan... tell a friend. :D

Please and thanks.

Chapter 46

The Art of Hope (46)

Chapter 46

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Eric's POV

My day was tiring, and I was ready to be in my bed relaxing. Scratch that, I wanted to be in my bed relaxing with Missy cuddled up against me like she was last night. I felt bad for leaving her this morning. She looked so peaceful and beautiful laying there with her hair smashed against her face and my t-shirt wrinkled form her movements. The last thing I wanted to do was get up and ready for a guys day out.

I left the party early to get back at a descent hour. I was sick of lying to myself, so I'll just say is, I came home for Missy. Fletcher had called me whipped and laughed, but I had a hard time getting angry with him - he was right. I had never gone out of my way for a girl before Missy, and thinking back on the first time I met her I understood something - I had always went out of my way for her. From that very first night I had went out of my way to bed her. Then again when I found out she was the King's daughter I went out of my way to have her. And surprisingly enough, I went out of my way to comfort her when she was broken into pieces.

My mind flashed back to the talk I had with her father this morning. The King sitting perfectly straight in his chair, with his green eyes that shined just like Missy's; I cowered in my seat.

"I saw the video." He had stated in a matter of fact tone. I had not a clue what to say, so I just nodded. "I know you are aware that I was pushing Missy on you..." He had trailed off and I smiled.

"Yes Sir, I was." I stated. Remembering that I thought it was going to be an easy father talk, I was wrong.

"Well, Eric, I am also aware of your reputation. Missy has had enough heartbreak. The fact that she is caring around her ex-boyfriends child is proof of that. I cannot have you hurting her." I laughed to myself thinking about the way his tone sent a chill down my spine. I was truly scared of him for the first time in my life.

"I have no intention to hurt her, sir." The look of shock had flashed across his face from the honesty I had shown him.

"Yes, Well, You do know that now people have seen her it will be harder to explain why we have kept her royalty a secret." If the King only knew how much that worried me. Missy had yet to grasp that important concept, but I did not have to heart to tell her - she did not need any more worry.

"Sir, We will get this all worked out. I never meant for us to get caught. I just wanted to take your daughter out." His eyes had softened and a small smile slipped across his face.

"Yes," he nodded his head, "One more thing and you may leave."

"What would that be?" I asked. At that time I was ready to leave.

"I want you to realize if this arrangement with Missy is to work out, someone will have to be a father to that child. If the two of you stay together, which I hope you do, she will expect you to fill that role." Just briefly I had thought about what he would say if he knew Jace was the father, but I was not going to be the one to bring it up.

I came back to the present my heart racing just like it did when he first spoke the words to me. I wanted very much too still be with Missy that long, but being a father to Jace's child was maddening. But what was truly maddening was the fact that a part of me wished that it was my child she was carrying.

"Sir, The flight is about to land." The airline attendant spoke to me and I shook the thoughts of a child out of my head. I would just have to take this relationship one step at a time.

"Yes, thank you."

I stood when the plane landed exiting without grabbing my bags, and debated on finding Missy and telling her I was back. Deciding against it because of the late hour, I padded out to my room undoing my tie and taking off my jacket.

"Eric," two men yelled from behind me as I was on my way up the stairs. I turned to see two frantic gay faces.

"Yes?" I asked in an annoyed voice. I had not the time for their silly games, because for once, I actually felt the pull to sleep.

"Missy," It was the only word they had to say and I was on my toes.

"Where?" I snapped and the same frantic look formed on my face as my heart beat painfully.

The two took off in a full blown sprint and I raced after them. They turned down the hall and to the stairs going for the club. I pushed myself faster knowing where she was at that moment. The loud

thumping of music changed the rhythm of my pulse. I craned my neck in order to find Missy.

"Missy!" I screamed pushing my way through the grinding servants. I found myself in the middle of the dance floor turning in every direction. I felt the need to scream her name again but I knew it would do no good; the music was too loud.

When I had lost all hope of finding her. The music sending my worry into overdrive and my heart pounding, I thought she was gone. But then a skimpy yellow top paired with dark booty shorts appeared in my vision. I knew it was her before my eyes found her face - there was only one girl who could look that sexy. When I realized what she was doing I lost my cool.

She was grinding up on a thin man with a bottle of Corona in her left hand. His hands roaming over her ass as she stuck it out, bouncing it to the rhythm. I felt so many emotions at once I did not know how to act. Feeling hurt, betrayed, enraged, but at the same time worried, and frustrated, I only let one emotion

show - anger. I thundered toward her pushing myself through the crowd to her.

Ever muscle in my body tensed as pure rage grew in my chest. When I made it to her I did not make a sound; I only wrapped my hand around her wrist and give it a not so light squeeze.

"Ouch," she whimpered, "Eric." She stomped her foot down on the ground but caused herself to lose her balance. I pulled her, no, I dragged her out of the club not saying a word to any of her whimpers. I was beyond angry and a littler hurt that she had found another dance partner so easy. "Eric, slow down." She slurred but I just kept going.

When I made it to my room I slammed the door closed letting her hand go. I sat down on the bed slowly with my hands fisting in my hair. I needed to keep my cool before I said something to hurt her. Never in my life have I been so frustrated with someone. Betrayal was thick in my veins - how could she. Taking in deep breaths I laid back on the bed forcing the anger out, so to think things out clearly -

there had to be a reason for her to do this. Missy was not the type to get wasted over nothing.

"You're angry..." She must have had her share because her words were unbelievably hard to understand.

I did not answer her, afraid that my temper would scare her. We just sat there in silence. Well, until she came to me. She sat straddling me. I could feel her hip bones pushing into my thighs. Closing my eyes tight I tried to shake away how good the feeling was. "I'm sorry," her impaired voice whispered into my ear. She let her index finger run from just below my earlobe to my chin. When she pulled down to give me a light kiss on the cheek her hip bones massaged my thighs again and I knew she could feel my arousal. If that was not bad enough she sat back up straight and they dug back into my muscles causing me to jerk at the sensation.

Giving a very drunk but yet very seductive giggle she clawed at my shirt, running her nails from my chest to my abdomen. I forced the grunt of satisfaction to stay deep inside me. She was drunk; there was no

way a sober Missy would come on to me like this. Bending down again she placed light kisses along my jaw line and I had to grasp the sheet to keep my sanity. A burning passion was building up inside me and if I did not cut it down now, I would probably never be able to stop her or myself. If we happened to roll in the sheets, she would hate me in the morning.

I forced myself to speak, "Missy..." I tried to put authority in it, but it sounded like a needy moan. Feeling a smile form on her lips at the base of my neck she rolled her hips. "Fuck," I breathed because the need in my pants grew to an overwhelming amount. Heat spread throughout my body my hands still firmly fisted in the sheets - I was slowly losing control. Her soft alluring lips that I had now grown to cherish were on mine with a sudden force, I gasped. The smell of alcohol invaded my senses - she was most defiantly wasted.

She moved down to my neck and the need to massage her hips was about to win out. The feel of her tongue flicking to my skin and blowing on the

wetness there caused an icy burn and a deep moan to escape my chest. Grabbing tighter at the covers I took in a deep breath of air and closed my eyes tighter willing myself to push her off. "Mis..." Not even getting her full name out she rolled her hips again causing my erection to beg to be inside her. One bead of sweat made its way down my forehead and I focused on it, hoping to forget the sensations she was making me feel.

I felt her pull away shifting her weight yet again on the bulge in my slacks. Biting down on my bottom lip I forced my eyes open only to see a topless Missy. I gave a quick glance to the yellow top that evidently had a built in bra then I stared back at her - she was beautiful and I was the luckiest man alive. Arching her back she gave a solid grind with her pelvic bone. My thoughts and body split down the middle - I wanted her so bad yet this was not how I wanted it to happen. Her nipples so hard I ached to taste them in my mouth and as she did another thrust with her hips my hand lost their hold on the sheets and came around her waist running up towards her prominent need.

"Do you know how fucking sexy you are in dress pants?" She slurred and I stopped my pursuit of her breasts. She was drunk, what was I thinking?

Placing my hands on her waist and rolling her off of me I finally found the strength to speak. "Not right now Missy."

Water breached the edges of her eyes, "But..." The shaking in her voice forced her to stop her question. I was thankful for it. I hated to see her cry, and I hated it more when I was the cause.

"It's not that I don't want to." I placed my hand on her cheek trying to ignore the fact that she still had no top on. "Trust me, I want to, but this is not right." I brushed away a tear as she nodded.

Standing up I padded to my closet getting out a plain white t-shirt for her. "Please put this on. I don't know if I can help myself if you don't have a top on." With that she giggled, it was a drunken giggle, but a giggle none the less.

I headed for the bathroom to take a very cold shower. This girl had the ability to drive me crazy even when

she was ass drunk. But most of all, I could not get the smile off of my face - I had done it. I had not taken advantage over her. Pride swarmed through my frame and my heart fluttered. My happy thoughts were put on the back burner when I thought of what could have sent her down the spiral of a drunken night. If it was Jace I would kill him, no second thoughts. He had done enough, and I think it's time I step in. The King was right, I needed to step in and be a father to this child if I really cared for her. From this point on I was going to be more than a boyfriend, I was going to be her and that child's everything.

After cooling down from that heated escapade, I claimed into bed with Missy. She was already fast asleep her lips slightly parted, her hair fanning across my pillow as she took up more than half the bed. I could not help but cup her cheek with my hand and run my thumb across her plump lips. Silently, I wondered if she knew how perfect she is, how gorgeous she is, how utterly breathtaking she is, but most of all I wondered if she knew the hold she had over me. Gently, I leaned in to give her a soft kiss on

her slightly parted lips. I rolled back onto my side facing her and for once, fell into a deep sleep.

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

Okay, So I know you don't know what has gone wrong with Missy. You WILL find out next chapter. Feel free to take a guess. Feel free to tell me how you feel about Eric... I love the Eric comments personally.

Like always, Vote, Comment, Fan, and tell a friend if you like. (:

Please and Thanks.

Chapter 47

The Art of Hope (47)

Chapter 47

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

Okay, Some of you will hate me for this chapter. Some of you will think I arranged this after reading some of your comments. But I am here to tell you, I have had this planned from the very BEGINNING!

Secondly, The song... ---✉ Over there. It is from Eric's point of view. I have had trouble deciding what POV to put this chapter in, but in the end I picked Missy's. So the song "Fix you" by Coldplay is how Eric is feeling about this whole thing.

Enjoy

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Missy's POV

I crawled back into bed with Eric after vomiting up everything I had to drink and eat last night. Tears still streamed done my face. I was heartbroken once again. Trying not to wake Eric up I buried my sobs in his pillow. The aching hole in my chest was back again, but for a whole new reason - I lost my baby. I clutched at the sheets as a violet rock of whimpers escaped and my body shook. My cries only adding to the headache caused by my extensive drinking.

Taking deep breaths I tried to quiet myself knowing Eric did not ever sleep well, and not wanting to be the reason he lost it. I should leave, but my heartache lessens just knowing he lay beside me, just knowing that if he were awake he would hold me and tell me everything will be okay. I needed to know everything would be okay, because for me nothing ever really was.

Forcing myself to not go into that numb state, that state where I feel nothing, that state I was left in after Jace broke my heart. I turned to face Eric and when my eyes landed on him the hurt was just a little less. He looked absolutely heart throbbing, and it eased my heart to know that he was mine - That I had something. It relieved the whole that made a home in my chest, but did nothing to take it away. I sobbed again covering my mouth so to not wake him from his beautiful slumber. When it pasted I reached for his hand, weaving my fingers through his - just needing to hold on to him.

I don't know how long I laid there, holding on to him for dear life as I cried out the pain. Was my love always wasted? I had trouble even believing in love anymore. This fling with Eric could just me that - a fling. Yet, I needed him more than I needed anyone in my life. If he had not been there for me I would have killed myself - literally. I would have fallen off into a spiral of self absorbed pity. He was the only one, other than my sister and my once unborn baby, that I cared for more than myself.

Tears now fell silently down my cheeks as I rested my pounding head and my aching body, but sleep would not come to me. My sobs were now light gasps of air coming in a rhythmical wave that caused the bed to shake a little. I held close to him to keep calm. I would get through this. I had to. And besides, I didn't need to bring a child into a dysfunctional lifestyle were the real father did not love the mother. The thoughts brought on a new wave of sobs and I tried my very best to hold them in. One little whimper pasted through my lips, and I squeezed my eyes shut taking deep breaths again hoping it would pass.

Slowly Eric's hand unwrapped from mine and came to rest on my cheek. My watery eyes opened quickly and were greeted with Eric's. His lips turned down into a worried frown, his eyebrows pulled up together over his eyes, which reflected the pain I was feeling. "What do you need me to do?" He asked, as if that was the most important thing in the world to him. Another wave of tears hit, but this time it was because I was overwhelmed with a warm burst of his

caring. Right down the middle, I was split - one side in total bliss and the other in total distraught agony.

"Hold me?" I questioned in a husky with tears voice. Pulling me into his bear grip he kissed my forehead softly. Three little words bubbled up into my mouth. I wished to say them, but I was terrified that if I spoke them some unknown force would pull him away from me. Absentmindedly, I pulled him closer.

Once my voice was steady enough to speak, I did. "Thank you, for last night." I breathed into his ear.

A deep chuckle rumbled his body and his breath fanned across my neck causing me to shiver. "It was my pleasure, Missy." He chuckled at some inside joke.

Pulling away, "Was it?" I asked bewildered. His eyes lit up with humor and I brief flash of disgust passed through me thinking he found my pain funny.

"For two reasons..." He trailed of leaning over to push away another stray tear his eyes worried again. "One, because waking up to you in my arms is a wonderful feeling." I took in a sharp breath at the comment and a happy tear came down my cheek and my lips

pulled up at the ends. My emotions confused of how they should feel at this moment. "Two, because I will never forget how sexy you are when piss drunk." That chuckle rumbled through his body again as he pulled a lock of my hair down to spring it up.

Flashes of last night had me remembering a very small bit of what went on. The main one being my straddling Eric, "Oh," I blushed a fierce red. "Oh, no..." I trailed off covering my face with my hands. If we had sex I am never going to forgive myself.

"Babe," Eric chuckled yet again. He pried my hands away from my tomato red face, "I didn't do you if that's what you're worried about." I let out a sigh of relief and a pounding came to my head.

"Good, I can't afford any more mistakes..." Seeing the hurt expression on his face I wished I could take the words back. "No," I said franticly, "I didn't mean you were a mistake. I meant," I paused trying to bring my rushed words to the point at hand. "I just..."

Giving a soft brush across my lips Eric silenced me. "You don't need to explain. I understand, but you know how we guys are. Physical is how we show our

feelings, so everything you did last night was understandable. Just let me remind you, I'm you man, not matter what." His accent made him sound so alluring, and as an added bonus it took my mind of the things a hand.

"And I just want you to know, Eric. You are the farthest thing from a mistake." Giving a smile he pulled me to him with a kiss so powerful I was sure my dead grandmother could feel it. It was unlike any kiss I had received from him. It was forceful and urgent, sweet and caring - just like him. His tongue plunged into mine causing me to moan. The little vibration tingled my headache, forcing me to pull away at an untimely point in our kiss. I didn't want to let go, but the throbbing pain just was not having it.

Smiling he ran his fingers through his hair, "I will make you a deal." Giving me no time to answer he began again, "You tell me what's wrong, and in return I will tell you every little embarrassing thing you did last night."

A fresh wave of tears found me once again. Clutching at my heart I buried my face in Eric's chest. He held

me tight his hands roaming on my back as he shushed me. "It's okay, I'm sorry. You don't have to tell me." He cooed to me and I tried to speak to him, but every time I opened my mouth all that came was a wheeze of air. "Missy, please," He begged sorrow clear in his voice, "don't cry." Holding my breath I tried to silence my cries but they weren't going anywhere. "Please," he begged again. Forcing myself to take a deep breath that invaded every corner of my lungs I began to calm.

I counted my breaths trying to take my mind off of the hurt at hand. Fifty seven breaths later he spoke, "There you go. That's my Missy." Placing a kiss on my forehead again I felt him relax a small fraction. "I'm sorry, I didn't know you were this upset." He apologized for no reason.

"Don't," I quick gasp of air shot through my mouth form my leftover crying, "be sorry." Another gasp of air cut me off. "It just hurts."

"I just hate seeing you so sad." He spoke in my ear giving me another kiss on the head. If it was possible

my heart melted leaving me feeling warm inside form his comment.

His caring words gave me confidence. "I lost the baby." I whimpered feeling another wave of tears, I held them back.

The force of his bone crushing hug knocked the air out of me. He did not say anything, maybe because there are no words to help a pain such as this. "I wanted a baby so bad." I whimpered into him just letting all the pain out. "I loved it."

Sitting up he cupped my face in his hands. "Don't give up on me, Missy. You can always try again, don't forget that." The intensity of his stare made my face to burn as I silently wish it could be with him. Nodding my head wordlessly I sighed.

In an order to forget I asked a question that I was afraid to know the answer to. "So, What did I do last night?" He jerked his hands away quickly and a faint pink spread over his face. "That bad?" Just when Eric and I were getting closer I had to do something so stupid.

"Well, to you it may be bad..." his voice shy.

"Eric," I whined.

"Missy, just remember you were too drunk to comprehend anything." Of course I knew that, the evidence was clear this morning along with the fact nothing could be retrieved from my memory.

He chuckled, his lips turning up into that smile - showing all his teeth and that one little dimple. "I don't know where to start."

"From the beginning..." I prompted.

"Okay," He nodded, flipping my hand over and tracing the lines there. The sensation should be illegal to feel. "Well, I arrived home from the party early. Granted it was one in the morning. I was headed to bed when your two friends came to get me."

"Tony and Mike," I answered him.

"Yeah them," He took in an angry breath as if he wanted to punch something. Stopping his tracing of my palm as his fingers fisted into themselves. "I

found you," Grinding his teeth together, "dancing with some fucking guy. He was touching you all over." Guilt consumed me - I was a horrible person.

I placed myself right in front of him, laying my hands on his shoulders. "Eric," I could feel the tears coming again. "I am sorry, I don't deserve you. You have been nothing my perfect and I-"a break in my voice stops me, "I treated you so badly." Tears flooded down my cheeks. Crying is all I ever seemed to do when Eric was around - I hated it.

"Missy, that's where you're wrong." He said cupping my cheeks in his hands, forcing me to look him in the eyes. "I don't deserve you. Do you not see how you have changed me? I'm not half as angry at the world, nor do I kiss up on every woman I see. I am happier, more confident, and hell, I even get some sleep at night." He whispered with every word growing closer to me. My heart literally stopped and a smirk grew on his lips, "but most of all, I think it is sexy as hell that you are only mine. That I have a claim on you and no other can have you. That you picked me." These words I was hearing were something I never

thought Eric would say - ever. The corners of my lips turned up and another tear rolled down my cheek - this time a happy one.

His lips met mine with such a strength it hurt my head, but I was not going to pull away - not this time. The tips of my fingers tingled with electricity and my heart raced forward. Soft wetness tickled my bottom lip as his tongue begged to enter my mouth. Eager to let him in they parted easily. Tingles ran their way up my spine. It was something I had never felt before. My heart rushed causing everything that was not Eric to slip away. I was faintly aware of him laying me back on the bed softly. His large hands now holding my neck in place as a burning heat fluttered throughout my body, so hot a bead of seat formed on my temple. I unwillingly broke off for some much needed air, but that did nothing to stop him. Holding himself with his trunk-like arms he kissed his was to my neck laying light kisses that did nothing to help me catch my breath. Remembering back to what he said earlier, I wondered if he was trying to tell me something. 'Physical is how we show our feelings' he had said. Was he trying to show me now?

His lips were back on mine now, and a moan escaped me. Smiling against my lips he grasped my bottom lip between his teeth getting a response out of me. My hands flew to his neck bringing him closer. Devine, that was how he tasted. When I let my fingers twirl in his hair I earned a grunt from him. Pulling away again he went to my earlobe pulling it between his teeth. He had me withering under his grasp, begging for more. I focused on not thrusting my hips up to him - I was not ready for that step. Well, physically I could take him any second but mentally I would kill myself. As if knowing the debate inside me he sighed and pulled away. His eyes held a new twinkle to them, like he was laughing at some inside joke. Huffing he rolled off of me and onto his back taking my hand in his.

Kissing my fingers he asked, "What happened? I mean, how did you find out you lost the baby?" His voice was quiet as not to upset me, but the subject was hard enough to talk about, and for a second I had completely forgot. Thanks to him. "Sorry, you don't have to answer." He must have taken my silence

as an I-don't-want-to-talk-about-it. Truth was, I really didn't, but with him it was not so hard.

"I was headed to dress fitting. A maid stopped me and said, 'Miss, you are leaking.' I panicked and ran to the nearest bathroom. I knew it was a bad sign to be bleeding so heavy when pregnant. It's not natural to have a period when carrying a baby." I felt my throat tighten up. "I went to the doctor and after he checked me out he told me 'Sorry, Miss Mary Elizabeth, but you lost the baby." My voice came out as a harsh shriek from holding back tears.

Eric held onto my hand tighter, if he only knew that not only was he holding my hand, but was holding my heart together as well. "Is there anything I can do?" He almost begged me.

"Just stay with me." Forever, I added in my head. He kissed my hand again before pulling me into his monster grip once more.

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Okay, So? I know some of you were mad (Or upset) about the whole pregnancy thing, but they needed

something to bond over. I had planned for her to lose the baby all along. I also tried to make this chapter not as depressing as other ones past. I tried to make it kinda even... A little bit of sexy lovable Eric in with the heartache. Oh, I am rambling. I will let you go now.

Vote, comment, Fan and maybe tell a friend?

Please and Thanks. (:

P.S. How did you feel about the song?

Chapter 48

The Art of Hope (48)

Chapter 48

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

The blue skies cast sun down on the land, green rolling fields broken up into perfect lines where roads and houses sit in all their glory. We had just past into America - the home so dear to my heart, but yet now had no hold on me. Rivers and lakes glistened in the still light causing my eyes to squint and the corners of my mouth to turn up - a ghost of a smile. I ached so badly to open a window and smell the land, the earth, the enriching smells of America, but seeing as I was on a jet it was not possible.

Eric's hand tightened around mine asking silently if I was okay. I squeezed his back noiselessly convincing him I was fine. He had been a wonder to me the past week. Always checking on me, going out of his way to make me smile, and teasing me with sexy comments like he had when I first arrived, making me feel truly sexy - for once. Surprisingly, it worked wonders - helping me to forget what a failure I felt and how hopeless I was about the whole situation. The pain was now easier to manage, but far from gone. I could now get through a whole day without bursting into tears at the slightest thing that reminded me of a child I had yet to name. Granted, I had only made it two days without crying, but it was a start.

Glancing over at him I smiled - a sad-happy one. Sometimes I would feel sad for no reason whatsoever and I hated that Eric got the butt end of everything. "You know, If you would like, I could go get some champagne from the cooler." He smirked at me obviously hinting back to that night. Warmth rushed to my face in embarrassment. He had filled me in completely about that night and I was so ashamed of myself. Sometimes I found that I avoided him just

because of it, and that was hard to do. It seems my heart could lead me to the any spot he stood, no matter where.

"Yeah, Yeah," I complained, running my fingers along the lines of his hand - trying not to meet his eyes.

"Why are you so ashamed of this? I don't see why you would be. I mean, you stripped for me, not some helpless lowlife." He chuckled, clearly joking with me. "Not to mention how sexy you are, now if you were some ugly bimbo, that is what you call them right," He stopped to check his word choice with me and I nodded. "Yes, if you were some ugly bimbo then, you could be ashamed." Intently staring at me he waited for a little more cheer.

It worked, I grinned up at him and he came down to my short level, well to him it was short, just to plant I soft peck on my lips. Still, the embarrassment was clearly not gone.

It would not be long now until we would land in Washington, D.C. We were to be staying in the White House instead of the hidden cabin. It would be a lie to say I was happy about that. Being locked in a cabin

with Eric sounded divine right about now. Not that I was ready for that next step, I just wanted to be alone with him. I mean, really alone with no one around. We had yet to be like that. Plus, he seemed to be the only one that could de-stress me. And Lord knows, I have been stressing. Eric was the only one that knew so far about the loss of my unborn child, and my job this week was to tell Annie. And that, was going to be hard to do.

"Are you day dreaming about me again?" Sarcasm thick in his voice, but I could hear the ounce of hope in there as well.

"Actually, yes." I smiled up into his silver-grey eyes. Today they had a hint of blue shinning in them. No doubt brought out by the light blue tie he had fixed around his neck.

I watched in amusement as the flicker of hope grew to hidden lust. He wanted me, I could tell, but he had yet to make a move. I silently thank him for that with every kiss. "It's good to know I'm not the only one." Eric being seductive was the hardest thing for me to turn down, but I did it.

Giggling I reached up to kiss him. These were the kisses I loved the most. The soft ones were our lips would just hold together for a second and pull away. Not that I didn't love the passion filled make outs, but these kisses meant something more. Eric on the other hand liked the passionate ones and I was not about to deny him anything. Just like always his hands traveled up to my neck holding me close so to ravish my mouth. The familiar heat pumped around my body along with the tingles down my spine. It was my body telling me it wanted more while the unsteady beat of my heat said otherwise. Smiling against my lips he pulled away, obviously knowing what he was doing to me.

"Sir, Miss," The flight attended interrupted. "We are about to land, please buckle up."

When she left Eric took another quick kiss from me and sat himself down to buckle. After I buckled myself up he took my hand in his - something that was becoming habit to us both. We were becoming a couple, Eric and I, and it was the most amazing feeling ever.

"What are you smiling about?" I brought my eyes intently to his so to study the glee that rested there.

Shrugging I smirked, "You."

"It seems I am a lucky man today." He pulled my hand to his lips lightly kissing it.

"Then you're a lucky man everyday!" I chipped.

"And you," His eyes smoldered, "are fucking lucky every second of your life. Especially because of that night." A dangerous wink suggested he thought of more than just my personality, and I know for a fact that my face turned candy apple red.

"Shut up!" I squalled, giggling like a school girl. Oh, the things Eric does to me.

– – –

To say I was nervous was an understatement. I, Mary Elizabeth, was about to meet the president of The United States of America. Eric and I were holding hands as we briskly walked to the double doors for a late night dinner. My three steps matching one of Eric's, and my heart pounding in a nervous rhythm.

"Eric, slow down." My shaky voice begged. Stealing a glance at me he found the worry etched into my brow.

Slowing his pace to a stop he took my face in his overly large hands, "You'll do just fine. It's not like we are discussing politics. Right now, we are just saying our hellos. Then it is off for some us time." Inhaling his sent help to calm me, biting my lips I shook my head.

He chuckled at my worried expression and dragged me along behind him, my legs having a hard time keeping up with his. "Eric, just give me a second." I scolded a little angry that he found my discomfort entertaining.

He stopped letting go of my hand and turned facing me. I gasped at the lust filled eyes and his lips attacked mine. The world around me melted in to soft inviting colors. Our tongues danced, my heart raced, ad my hands worked in his hair and his circled my hips. Pulling away before I was ready he whispered in my ear. "Please don't use that tone with me... It makes you to fucking sexy to resist." Appalled

by his words I walked my way to the door ready to get on with things.

He laughed softly behind me, forcing me to pick up my pace. But with Eric and his super long legs, he was beside me taking my hand in no time.

The big white double doors opened as we past, just like it should for royalty. We were blessed with solid white walls paired with extravagant gold accents. If I was not already royalty my mouth would have dropped. The President and First Lady stand to greet us, giving a slight bow to Eric and a nod to me. I thanked the stars that they did not know who I was; I was not ready to be treated like royalty.

"Prince Delamater," The president bowed to Eric. Eric gave him a nod before moving to introduce me.

"This is my good friend, Mary Elizabeth Dawson." I smiled, at the two of them sweetly, trying to not worry about Eric calling me a 'good friend.'

"How do you do, Mister President," I nodded to him.

The dinner went by slowly; Small talk was boring and secluded me out because I knew nothing on the

subjects. Eric kept giving me looks that I could not decipher, but that could have been because I was still upset about earlier. When all our good-byes had been said, the President had informed Eric the meeting would begin at 9:00 AM sharp. So, I would be left all by myself for the next two days until it was all over.

For some reason I was feeling down, I just couldn't find the happiness anywhere. "Missy, what's wrong?" Eric asked as we made our way to our separate rooms.

"Nothing, just not feeling up to anything, I think I am just going to go to bed early tonight." I just could not find motivation to do anything.

"Oh," his face fell. Guilt consumed me. "I just thought that maybe you would want to bowl with me. I never bowled before, and I don't know," scratching the back of his head while looking at the floor he continued. "I just thought that maybe you could teach me?"

How could I say no? It was the first time he had unleashed his puppy-dog eyes, but it worked wonders for him. Making his eyes look ten times larger than normal and pouting out his bottom lips I

was strangely attracted to him in that moment. It was not a usual attraction, no, this was an I-will-fallow-you-to-the-depth-of-the-earth attraction. "Okay," I sighed, giving into him. "Just let me change my clothes."

After fitting into my shorts and a tank top I met Eric at his door. He was dressed in athletic shorts and a t-shirt like the one I had slept in a couple of times. I could not help but be sadden that he had a shirt on - his muscles where too beautiful to be covered.

"Thank you, for coming with me." He whispered into my ear while taking my hand. All I did was smile and nod not really knowing what to say.

He swung our arms back and forth wildly, as we made our way to the bowling-alley.

Turns out Eric was a fantastic bowler, we had just bowled are fourth turn and he had received ten more points than I. He made sure I knew it, too. "Hey, babe, why don't you slide it down the court and not into the gutter?" He joked as I picked up my ten pound pink ball. All I did was turn around to stick my tongue out at him. "I'd love to." I winked at me seductively

taking my action as some perverse joke. Shaking my head, I turned to bowl.

I was never good at bowling; the highest score I had ever made in bowling was a 124, but anything was fun with Eric. Holding the ball at the center of my core, I lounged my left foot forward gently releasing the ball to the center of the lane. It lacked the speed Eric's had, but it hit just in the middle causing all the balls to topple to the floor. With I squeal I jumped up and down. This was my first strike, ever. For some unknown reason I ran to him at full speed. Eric being a strong man and twice my size had no problem catching me. He pulled his hand under my butt to hold me up as I wrapped my legs around his waist. He spun me, and for the moment I felt completely safe. Almost as if nothing in the world could hurt me.

He had stopped spinning now, but he held me closer - is if not wanting the moment to end. The dizziness faded and I opened my eyes to be met with Eric's silver-grey ones. "Damn, you're beautiful," he whispered before pulling me into a soft kiss. That is when I knew it; he was the one I wanted to spend the

rest of my life with. This thing we had, it was more than love - I had found my soul mate.

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

I know nothing "eventful" happens in this chapter, and I am very sorry! But as you may know a relationship is built on the eventful AND the uneventful. Plus, we all know this is Eric fist relationship, so we have to see how good he is at it... (: don't you just love him. *Sigh* Haha

And I want to say THANK YOU! OMG I WAS ON THE 3 RD PAGE OF THE WHAT'S HOT LIST! NUMBER 38 WAS THE HIGHEST I GOT, I THINK! I AM SO FLIPPIN' OUT RIGHT NOW. MY FAMILY KEEPS LOOKING AT ME AS IF I AM CRAZY BECAUSE I HAVE BEEN IN SUCH A GREAT MOOD!

Anyways, Thank you so much. Really! I will be working on uploading my new story in the next weeks, but I will upload this one as well.

Vote, Comment, Fan!

Please and thank you! (I would love to get to the second page... can you help me?)

P.S. A Happy Mother's Day to all you mother's out there!

Chapter 49

The Art of Hope (49)

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Chapter 49

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So this chapter goes out to my dear mother for letting my use her brand new computer. I know she will never read this story. Mainly because I don't want her to... I mean I have sex in it, and that, my friends, would just be very weird.

Now, I was going to put a re-cap but seeing as all my other chapters are on my computer I am just going to say, read the last update. :D

And thanks to all my new fans. I can't believe you all love this story this much. I mean, reading back on it. I hate the first 20 or so chapters. My spelling is horrid, and my grammar was all over the place at times but I am glad that I stuck with my original plot.

Here we go! Enjoy!!!

Eric's POV

My eyes opened to a dimly lit room, the smell of lavender thick throughout the air. Missy. I pulled her into me more, letting her back press firmly to my chest and abs. It had been too long since I last held her sleeping form in my arms.

The past three days had been nothing more than arguing and complaining with the President of The United States. Long day's stretching into even longer nights; the President forcing his point that he needed to put a military base on our happy little island. I wasn't having it. I told him he need not worry with us attacking him. We were simply too small of a country.

Wrapping my arms around Missy once more, I relaxed. I felt like I had neglected her the past few days, and I hated that. She needed to know I would be there for her, and the last time I had been with her was about two days. Plus, I needed to kiss her.

It had been far too long. I remembered kissing her in the bowling room. It was a fierce kiss that said more to her than I ever could in words. Simply put, I needed to feel those lips under mine once more. And the flicker of something bright in her eyes had me yearning to know what she was thinking. What she was holding from me. I had every intention of finding out what the flicker was.

I snuggled my face into her soft curls. They tickled my face. Even in her sleep she enchanted me. I wanted so badly to wake her, to surprise her. Because I had snuck in late last night just to hold her. It was strange, but I found I slept better when she was safe in my arms. Her cuddled to me in the deepest of beautiful slumbers.

Today we were to set off to her old place. I would get to meet Annie, Jason, her mother, and her little sister.

All of them I wanted to meet, except her mother. My fists squeezed in tension just from the thought of her. That woman had caused her so much pain, heartache, and even embarrassment. Missy would half to carry that discoloration on her foot for the rest of her life, all because her mother could not pull herself together.

I pulled away to get a full view of the woman in front of me. Her back was turned toward me, gracing me with a curvy view. Not being able to contain myself, I placed my hand fully on her bent arm running it down the length of her body. I sighed as my hand traced the dip of her waist. I could almost feel the buttery smoothness of her skin through the thin fabric. I literally groaned out loud when I felt her firm bottom under my grip. This was a bottom I had yet to fully explore, but shit, I was ready as hell to now. Forcing myself to pass it up, in order not to wake her, I continued downward until my hand rested on her thigh. Basking in the glory that this woman was mine, I closed my eyes and smiled. I was a lucky man. No, I was the fucking luckiest man in the world. And I was NOT going to mess this up.

A soft hand being placed over mine brought me back to the moment. I could not see her face, but I could imagine that smile pulling the corners of her pink lips up.

Denying my body of her touch was just not cutting it anymore, and so, with a predator like growl and a jerk of her arm she was on top of me. A sleepy grin on her face and her eyes still held that extra flicker of something.

"Good morning." She whispered, her action almost drug like.

Not bothering to greet her back, I pulled her to me eagerly letting my lips connect withers. I felt the corners of her lips turn up. Sparks sizzled as our mouths worked together into one. I was surprised by her eagerness, as her hands rubbed at my neck. Her tongue dominated mine while distracting me by tugging at my hair. My hands were in hot pursuit of her firm ass. And she knew it too, because she leaned in closer giving me full range. She and I both gasped at the same time when my hand squeezed at the perfectly toned muscle. The tables had now turned

and I was devouring her taste, all the while she gasped for air. I felt her shiver under me as my tongue made its way to her neck and then to the soft spot below the ear.

"Okay," she huffed, shivering again as I began to nibble on her earlobe.

I groaned in protest, not being anywhere near done assaulting her glorious bum.

"Eric, please," She whined sitting up, and when I opened my eyes I saw why we had to stop.

Her nipples raised the soft material of her shirt. They were hard meaning she was turned on. Just from a little butt rubbing and neck nibbling. Her body was calling for mine just as mine was calling for hers.

"Yeah, sorry," I whispered awkwardly, my eyes landing on her flaming red face. She was embarrassed over something so simple, so natural, and I just could not have her embarrassed about this. "Babe, don't look at me like that. If you want to know embarrassed then reach back there and feel. I am as hard as a rock."

It worked just as I planned. She broke into a fit of giggles. They rang through the room brightening the gloomy mood. I may not know much about relationships, but I did know that the sound she was making was the most beautiful thing I had ever heard.

"Okay, Okay," I chuckled right along with her. "Go get ready. We have family to meet."

I drove the car as she gave directions. As a surprise to her I had the guards drive separate and they would park a block away, so to give us the feeling of normalcy - well, for her. She hummed along to the radio as I tangled her fingers in mine. I was nervous to say the least, but I was not going to tell her that. I was to be the rock that never broke, but here I was shaking in my shoes.

We were on our way to Annie's, her best friend. I had to admit to myself that meeting Annie was somewhat scary. I knew she felt for Missy as a sister and if she did not approve of me that would shadow Missy's view of me. But, I should be happy another person cares for her so. And, I am.

Without warning, soft lips brushed my cheek. The smile would not be stopped from entering my face. "And what would that be for?" I glanced over at her to see a mischievous look on her face.

"Nothing," She shrugged.

"Sure? Because I am not buying it."

She flashed me an appalled face. "Whatever do you mean?" Shaking my head, I let it drop, not wanting to question such a sweet action.

She went back to humming and I relieved in the fact she was happy. I hated seeing her so sad. It was a pain inside her I could not fix, and it killed me that time was the only solution.

This trip was going to upset her again. I knew, because I was fully aware she had not told anyone else about the loss of her child.

Annie would bring back all her painful memories of heartache and failure, and there was nothing I could do to stop it.

Thinking about Annie had my nerves back again and my palms started to sweat.

"Stop worrying." Missy scolded.

"Worrying?" How could she tell? It put me on edge she could read me so well.

"Don't play stupid with me. I know that you are worried about meeting my friends and family. Don't be."

"And how do you know this?" I questioned trying to add a light care-free tone.

"They'll love you!" She chipped, playing with the hair on my arms.

"And, how do you know this?" I pressed.

"Because, I do." It took me a moment to realize that she had not meant she just knew they would love me, but that she meant SHE loved ME. My heart stopped. Her hands ripped away from me quickly and she turned to look out the window.

That flicker of something in her eyes. It was a twinkle of love. And the worst part was, I had the slightest

clue what to say, because for the first time I actually had to think about what I was feeling. Did I love her back?

_ _ _ _ _ _

So, this is so short. I am so sorry, but you can't say it is a boring chapter... Well, I guess you can.

Leave me some love

Fan

Vote

Comment

Please and Thanks

Chapter 50

The Art of Hope (50)

Chapter 50

"Annie" I screamed, making my way to her.

"Missy!" She pulled me into a strong hold, not letting me go.

When she pulled away her hand found its way to my belly, where a baby bump should be forming. This made my mood take a sudden crash. All the happiness I was feeling drained from my body. I felt like washed up cargo, forgotten and alone.

"Missy, what's wrong?"

I shook my head to clear my thoughts, but it was too late the sinking feeling was slowly taking over. The unbearable pain in my chest was back. I knew this was going to be hard, but there was nothing I could do to prepare for it.

"I... lost it." It was no time until I was in her arms having the life squeezed out of me. The comfort was something I needed. She understood. She knew the pain I was feeling, unlike Eric. I knew that he tried to understand, but no man can truly understand if they are not the father. He hates Jace and I know there is a little part of him that does feel some happiness I lost it.

We cried together. Right there, in the middle of her living room our lovers standing around awkwardly, we just cried. There was a bond between us, Annie and I, which was so strong at times we did not have to say a word. And right now, the bond was unbreakable.

After our tears had dried and our hearts were somewhat healed, I pulled away, desperate to save this day.

"Yes, Okay." I collected my thoughts. "I guess I should introduce someone to you." Annie's smile grew knowingly. He was my 'prince charming' as she had put it once before. "This is Eric." I did not add a last name afraid that Jason would put two and two together.

When my eyes met his I saw the worry resting there, along with the longing to comfort me. But my outburst in the car had me blushing and turning away.

"So this is the Eric?" I did not miss the awe in her tone. "He is smoken!" She made sure I was the only one to hear.

She was right. He was the handsomest, most dashing man I had ever laid eyes on. And, he wanted me, for now. I was his girlfriend, but how come it just did not feel like enough anymore?

Walking over to him, I pushed the awkwardness away. He had not said a word to me in the car, and I was afraid things would never be the same. I took his hand and noted that he was calculating my every move making me try ever so hard to act normal.

Easier said than done, I had a hole in my heart and it was waiting patiently for him to utter the three little words.

"Eric, this is Jason and this is Annie." He took each of their hands giving them a stiff shake.

Annie stared at him as if he was a famous supermodel. I could tell she was shocked at his size and looks. Obviously, she thought I was lying about his looks. That will teach her, I guess.

"So, you and Missy, eh?" Jason chuckled, "Not bad man, not bad at all." He seemed to find the whole thing extremely funny and I had the slightest clue why.

"Why don't you guys head to the living room while we bring you some beers?" I followed as she made her way to the kitchen.

Just as I entered Annie had spun around toward me, a serious look plastered on her face.

"You're falling to fast, Missy!"

"What?" I had told her everything and she agreed that he was kind and genital. Now, I was at a loss of words. I didn't understand the sudden change in her.

"You and Eric aren't going to make it if you fall so fast, again."

"How can you say that?" I forced myself to not lose eye contact.

"Over the phone I just thought he was your rebound. But, I saw the way you looked at him. You would follow him to the end of time if you had to."

I shrugged, "Is that such a bad thing?"

"Yes," her voice soft as a whisper, "you just broke up and on top of that just lost a baby. Missy, you don't love him. His is only a rebound and a crutch."

"You're wrong." I knew she was just looking out for me, afraid that I would get hurt again, but I could not help but feel my heart breaking. She could be completely right. But the burning feeling inside me told me she was completely wrong.

"I love you, girl. You know that. I just don't want to see you get hurt. How do you know he loves you back? How do you know he will never leave you?"

"I don't," I cowered in defeat. I had tried to salvage an afternoon of fun but she just wasn't going to let that happen.

"Here take these beers. I'm going to grab some chips."

Eric seemed to since my down mood, but I did nothing to hide it. All I could do was stare at the wood flooring and pray to God that we could leave soon. Annie had broken what little spirit I had left.

It was not long until Eric settled into the vibe of my friends and everyone was laughing, except me. Being the sweetheart Eric is, he kept a hand on my knee at all times, comfortingly. I was glad he never took it off, because if he had I probably would have lost it, again.

Annie seemed to notice what her words had done to me, and the regret was clear in her flowing blue eyes.

"...yeah, I have been working on the old thing forever." Jason huffed, bringing me back to the present. "Come on, I'll show you."

Eric glanced at me, as if asking for permission. Smiling sadly, I shooed him on his way. He didn't leave without placing a soft kiss on my lips.

"I hate myself." She sulked when they had both gone.

"No, you're right. I don't know if he loves me, but I just can't stop loving him to save myself. I never have been, and I never will be able to do that."

"You may be making the biggest mistake of your life but I had killed your spirit of the only good thing you have. He is good to you, Missy. Real good to you. I'm so stupid." How could I stay mad when she hated herself for saying it?

"NO, you brought me back down to earth." Her apology was already working; my spirits were on the rise.

"So, he just can't keep his hands offa you, eh?" She winked, and just like that I had forgotten all the hurt.

I blushed uncontrollably, "You have no idea."

It sent her into a fit of laugher and things seem to be right, again. We chattered all night about the loves of your lives.

We had originally planned to see my mother and Katie tonight, but the guys hit it off so well we stayed.

"You and Jason seemed to get along well." Finding conversation when things were so awkward between us was almost impossible.

"Yeah," Eric said, walking from the hallway, a toothbrush in his mouth and boxers swung dangerously low on his waist.

"What did you guys talk about?" I managed to look away from his form.

"Wouldn't you like to know?" He joked, in an effort to lighten the mood. It didn't work.

"Yes, I would like to know." I began in order to distract myself from the lump in my throat. "I would really like to know what Jason found so funny about the two of us."

Holding up one finger in signal for me to wait a second he took off to the hallway bathroom. I grabbed a magazine from the bedside table. The nagging worry of him not loving me back was almost unbearable.

I had just leaned my back against the headboard, slowly skimming through the pages when he came back.

"He was laughing at something Jace had told him."

"What was that?" as hard as I tried to hold back my frantic look; I knew Eric could see it.

"Jace had told him once that he was afraid he would lose you to me, and that he wasn't sure he loved you like you loved him."

Again, the lump in my throat was rising. I was not going to cry, not here, not again. I need not cry over Jace anymore, but so many things in my life were attached to him. A lost baby, years worth of memories, and a friendship that is lost forever. Tear still found an escape, a silent river fan down my face.

At the moment, I hated myself for crying. Eric didn't deserve this.

He was at me in one second, holding me, caring for me. But not loving me, which was what I wanted. The longing was one of the most frustrating feelings I had ever felt in my life.

"What did I do?" He chuckled in an effort to lighten the mood. Still, it did not work.

"Nothing," and it was true. I can't expect him to say I love you when he himself is not ready. This was my fault, not his.

He rolled on his back, head on a pillow. I still rested my head on the headboard of the bed. It put me at just the right angle to see him.

My mood swing now coming to a close, I ran my fingers through his soft hair. In that moment I didn't care if he loved me. I knew I loved him and I knew nothing would change that. I knew for a fact that I would love him until death do us part. And that had me dreaming of a wedding and family with him.

I remembered him once saying to me 'Don't give up on me, Missy. You can always try again.' Did that mean he would be the one to give me that second chance?

He softly snored, rolling over until his head rested on my chest. The position backwards from what it always was. This was what I wanted. I wanted him, forever and ever. And as long as he did not love another I would be here, loving him.

"I love you. I love you so much." I whispered as he dreamed on.

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Well, Please leave me some love. I am working hard to get you guys back into the story. And if you have not read my new story I would love it if you did. But, I do understand if you don't. Just thought I would ask again.

Vote, comment, fan. Please and thank you.

Chapter 51

The Art of Hope (51)

Chapter 51

It was hard to convince Eric that my mother had changed. He believed that people like that don't ever truly change. He was wrong, my mother was different. She cared now.

"Eric, just trust me. She is different. Do you really think I would make that day up? It was one of the happiest days of my life." I stared at him. His brow pulled into a worried frown, as he drove through my old town.

"I have seen what she has done to you. How can a person change after hurting their own blood?"

"You'll see." I mumbled, angrily.

There was silence, and it was uncomfortable for the both of us. It was thick and mucky making it almost impossible to breathe.

"You said one of the happiest days?" Curiosity etched his features.

"Yes, just one." I shot him a sly smirk.

"Well, what is the happiest day of your life, then?"

I blushed feverishly. There was no way I wanted to tell him, but I knew that some way he would crush my will and he would find out.

"Come on, you have to tell me. I'm your boyfriend." For some reason him using the word 'boyfriend' made it sound like I was in high school, again. In all truth I hated the word, because I felt we had something more.

"I don't have to tell you anything." I stuck out my tongue, and then went into hysterical giggles.

"Oh, really?" Then tone told me that he would do anything to find out.

"Yes." He turned the right hand signal on and began to pull off on the side of the road. When he stopped the car his gaze nearly made my heart stop.

That smile was on his face now, one dimple, white teeth, and a glow in his eyes. God, I love him.

He unbuckled himself crawled over the divider of the seats. I closed my eyes when his lips came to the nape of my neck. One soft kiss there, another under my ear, one at my jaw. I was faintly aware of cars zooming by and shouts of 'get some' from the guys driving them, but I had no will to blush. What consumed my mind was the longing for his lips on mine.

He placed a kiss on my forehead, my eyelid, my nose, the corner of my mouth, but never my lips. I forced myself to hold fast to my will, and so I focused my eyes on the road outside. But, his kisses had me squirming under him.

"Please," I begged desperately.

A dark seductive chuckle rumbled through him. "Not until you tell me."

My mind could not comprehend his words, but when they did I locked my mouth tight focusing on the road again.

His kisses returned with determination. He had me gasping in seconds as he sucked on the skin of my neck.

"Okay, Okay." I shivered, giving into him. He didn't pull away and I knew he wouldn't until I told him. "It was the... day you... asked me out." Gasps breaking up the sentence.

"What?"Astonishment flowed throughout the car, and then his eyes meet mine with an intensity that gave me hope. Maybe he did love me.

A gleaming twinkle lit up his face, but I did not have a chance to study it. I thought it was impossible for his kisses to be more demanding, but the energy of this one proved me wrong.

When we broke apart, his lips were swollen from my kisses and his hair ruffled from my fingers. He was beautiful. It was as simple as that.

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"Sissy!" Katie screamed while running at me full speed.

"Katie." I sighed in relief. We had been separated for far too long. I drew her to me tightly, almost afraid to let go.

"I love you, sissy." It was only then that I truly knew how long it had been. Katie had mastered the 'L' sound and I wasn't here to see it.

"I love you, too." I sobbed into her hair.

"What's wrong?" As I pulled away she placed a chunky hand on my cheek.

"I just missed you so, so, so, so much." And it was true. In this moment I wanted to bring her back with me, and never let me go. Something I wish I would have never left, but if I hadn't I would have never met Eric.

"Who's the boy?" She whispered in my ear as if it was a scandalous secret.

"He's my new... boyfriend."

"Jace?" It was easy to see she was heartbroken he had not come. I believed she loved Jace more than I ever had. And at that moment, for my baby sister's sake, I wished he had been the one to come.

"Sometimes things don't work out, but Katie, He still loves you very much." I never have lied to my sister and I knew she understood she may never see him again. But, all the same, she had every right to know even if it were not the whole truth.

"Hey Katie, I'm Eric." Katie and I both jumped not realizing he was right beside us. He had that smile plastered on his face. The one dimple and white teeth glimmering smile.

Katie buried her head in my neck. I gave Eric an apologetic smile.

"Now Katie, I think you should at least say hello."

With wet eyes and a heart wrenching face she hiccupped a quick "Hi."

Eric grabbed my bag and fallowed me in my old home. A man was in the kitchen cutting up carrots

and onions. The clean cut man was familiar to me, but for the life of me I could not place where from.

"Your mother is in the bathroom. And the guestroom is ready, if you would like to put your things away." He did not turn and I hated the rudeness of is greeting.

"Guestroom?" We never had a guestroom when I was here.

"Yes, we fixed up your old room."

I sat Katie down and told her I would be back in a minute. Eric fallowed me through the remarkably clean house.

I opened the door to my old room. I was sixteen when I had moved out but I remember it perfectly. I had one twin bed in the corner and a dresser against the long wall. Back then the white walls where stained yellow from the smoke. My books would be stacked in the corner next to the window. I never had a bookshelf.

Now, the walls were a crisp white. Lavender curtains blocked the light from entering. A full sized bed

rested directly under it. It was the same dresser I had, but had been re-finished to match the cherry-oak wood of the bed posts and side tables, and a bookshelf now made itself at home along the opposite wall. My mother had made my dream room. I had drawn it in my ninth grade art class. Now, my lavender room was a guestroom. She really had changed.

"You okay?" Eric asked, worried. I felt his hand wrap around me from behind and he rested his chin on my shoulder. "Have I told you, you look beautiful today?"

A radiant smile lit my face. "No, but you have now." I had picked the little white strapless sundress just for him. You know you love someone when everyday you pick out your outfit just for them. "You look handsome yourself."

He kissed my neck. "Okay, let's go now before I get carried away in your sexiness."

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"See, that wasn't so bad." I said walking into our room. "My mother has a steady boyfriend, who

happens to be Doctor Anstein from the Back-On-Track Clinic. And she said 'I love you' more tonight than she has in all my life. See, I told you she had changed."

He sat down on the bed and began to unbutton his top. I watched with utmost attention as he slowly undid the first one, showing the dip of his collarbone. I was faintly aware that I licked my lips as he went down to the second one. Before he unbuttoned it he glanced up at me as if to say something, but my gawking stopped him.

Quickly, I averted my eyes and a fierce heat engulfed my face and neck. Ignoring him I laid down on the bed drinking in the bedroom. Tears pricked my eyes.

"What is it about this room?" He studied my face.

"It was my dream room. I drew a picture of it in ninth grade, back then all this room had was yellow walls, a twin bed, and a dresser. My mother decorated it as I wanted it once." The smile was not left unnoticed.

Eric was leaning over me now, brushing my tears away. There was a new intensity in the way he studied me. Almost as if I was the only woman in the world. It seemed we gazed at one another for hours, and a couple of times he opened his mouth as if to say something. I didn't want to ruin the moment by asking, so I just wondered.

Suddenly, he took in a deep breath, "Missy, I'm not sure how to say this, and I don't quite understand these feelings," my heart stopped, "but I am pretty sure," anticipation had me breathing heavily, "I love you."

A swelling feeling rushed through my limbs and heart. Tingles burst in my fingertips and toes. He had said it. A fire unlike any other pressed through my veins. I was so overcome with this one emotion I did not know what to feel. I was caught in a moment, not knowing what to do, to kiss him or tell him I love him back.

"Oh Eric, I love you, too."

He didn't waste any time showing me how much he loved me. His mouth was overpowering me; heat was

rushing through my limbs. His tongue ran circles around mine as his right hand curved along my body.

"This doesn't mean I will have sex with you." I joked, his lips still on mine.

Pulling away, his beaming smile was bright with understanding. "Surprisingly, that was the farthest thing from my mind."

"Surprisingly?" I questioned.

"Do you not understand what you do to me?" He shook his head, a wild smirk playing at his lips. "Just your walk makes me think of having you, your smile makes me need you, and just one touch starts a blazing fire." He traced a line from my temple to my chin.

"Really?" I smirked, a wicked idea form in my head.

He groaned out load, "Don't give me that look. Damn, I know your planning something."

My smirk grew wilder. "So if I touch you here," I said placing my lips ever so gently on the corner of his mouth, "I light your fire." He tried to remain calm but

I knew it was taking all his strength to not move. "Or here?" I moved to his adam's apple. "What about here?" I said moving his shirt away to kiss his nipple.

That got a response, he jerked under me slightly and I positioned myself completely on him. "Please don't-" He was cut off by his own grunt when I kissed it again, but this time grazing my teeth against the nub.

"What if I touch you here?" I slithered down to his belly button. I could feel his 'fire' growing hard just beneath my chest. I placed and ever soft kiss there and moved lower, my mouth just hovering over his growing need. I knew it was wrong to tease him so, but he loved me. Plus, this was as close as we were getting to sex, for now.

"Oh, no you don't." With hast, he was out from under me and I was under him. "You pressed all the wrong buttons, babe. Now, you're going to pay. "

I giggled at his fake harsh tone. And kept giggling, until my dress was pushed up by his head. He planted little kisses up my thigh then back down to do the same with the other. Unlike Eric, I didn't have control and I was instantly breathing hard and

wiggling under his expert touch. Then he did the unthinkable. Right in the middle of my white lace panties, he placed a kiss. I gasped, closing my legs together tight. Luckily, Eric's head had escaped, and his wild smirk was playing on his lips. He made me wet myself, and he knew it. He had won.

"That was just a promise, babe. A promise that one day, I will get to SHOW you how much I love you." That was all I needed to know. He would wait and he wanted to show me he loved me, not show me how good in bed he was.

"I love you, Eric."

"Babe, I love you, too."

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I am not even going to put anything here. I am just going to let you soak that in.... :D

Chapter 52

The Art of Hope (52)

Chapter 52

Eric and I, well, we were in a full blown relationship now. A day never went by without an 'I love you' and it seemed that he really truly did. All my worries from before had drifted away like leaves in the fall.

It has been more than a month from the first 'I love you' and still, I get that same feeling every time he says it. My father loves us being a couple; although, he never says anything; I still know. Eric and I make it a point to go out twice a week, so that our 'getting to know each other' time was not always in the bedroom. Not that we have taken that step. We have

come close, very close, but never really done the dead. I told him that I was scared that something would take him away from me if I did it. It was hard to convince him that I was not talking about him, but that I felt there was some force that did not allow me to love anyone.

For whatever it is worth, he still is with me.

Tomorrow is my birthday, and I wanted all of my family and friends to come to the castle. Well, things didn't work out. My mother now has a steady job and can't miss work. Annie and Jason are going to his parents' house for a week. So, it's just me and my father in the morning hours. Eric still does not know, and I did not tell him. I really don't want him to do anything for me. He has done enough.

But enough about that, at this point in my stay things were getting harder. I was on my way to my first council meeting, now. And shaking in my shoes. I don't know what to say or what to do. Dad was not going to be there, so it's just Eric and I along with stuck up men. Yes, I am the only girl. And to top it all off, they all look down on a girl running this country.

Especially, a girl from America. I wanted to run and hide, but my pride made me stand tall. Thank goodness for pride.

The big doors were opened for me and I gracefully walked in. I kept my eyes on Eric the whole time, forcing the ignorant assaults on my past, background and style to the back of my head. They hated me, and I don't see why they shouldn't. I came in and just took their country right out from under them. I would be angry with me as well.

I nodded my head and said my hellos. Some of them graced me with a head bow, other just glared at me. I took it in stride. Eric mouthed a "You look so sexy I could eat you up" and I knew he said it to distract me. It worked.

"Now, Down to business." Eric began and I marveled in his ability to enforce so much authority. "What is first on the agenda?"

"We need cut backs. We are losing money since America has stopped trading with us." The short balding man shot me a death glare.

"Well, does anyone have an idea where to cut back?" Eric asked shuffling though papers. A part of me was so turned on by his business man quality; I could just crawl across the table to him.

"Well, health care receives the most funding. We could skim a little off of that to make the difference." I rather young looking man added. That was the worst idea ever, I thought before letting my eyes linger on Eric again.

"Are you sure there is no other place to dip into? What about taking some out of the Army? The country is not in war." Eric caught my lustful eyes, smirked, then continued looking though his papers.

"When America could attack us at any moment? We should take it out of the health care!" The man's voice rang throughout the room as his fist slammed down on the table.

Eric's face turned into a frown, "America has no intention of attacking us. I have talked to them, so if you would please, drop that subject."

"You are just like your father, never will do anything to prevent. Always undermining and reacting, while a spy sits right across from us." Anger flooded throughout me and I could do nothing to stop it.

Eric stood as if to say something, his face turning slightly red with anger.

"With all due respect, sir." I began, "That has nothing to do with the subject. And as for taking away money from health care, well, if you can't learn from America's mistakes then you deserve to fall under. Plus, you obviously don't know Eric or his father very well." All of them gawked at me. Except for Eric, his smile was bright and filled with pride.

No one said a word to me. Some carried on as if I had said nothing, but most of them regarded me with an utmost respectful manner. It is amazing what a little mind specking can do.

Two hours later, it was over. My feet hurt form my shoes as well as my head from the angry men. The subject was to be finished tomorrow morning, so I would not be attending, thank goodness.

"You were wonderful." Eric complemented as he pulled me into him. He hugged me, and I slipped out of my shoes while I wrapped my arms around his waist.

"You weren't so bad yourself." I said, pulling away from him, ready to change into some comfy clothes.

"I was wondering..." He let the sentence hang open. I peered at him through my eyelashes.

"Yes?" I asked while he drank in my form before meeting my eyes, again.

"Would you have some free time for dinner tomorrow?" He already knew the answer, but it was refreshing for him to ask anyways.

"Why yes, babe, I think I can pencil you in." He took my hand in his, swinging them as he walked me to my room. We were comfortable with each other, and it was refreshing to me that I could trust someone so.

I really had never trusted anyone like I have trusted Eric. He has known my darkest of secrets, and had kept them until I was ready to tell. I wasn't kidding when I said he was my soul mate.

Eric's POV

My babe was amazing in every single way. It filled me with pride how she talked to those twisted men today. They had no right to speak about her that way, and I was about to put my job on the line for her, but she stepped right in and took care of it herself. Every part of her was enchanting, and I found that I never grew sick of learning more about her.

I loved her. I don't think I will ever stop either. Every kiss, every touch, every flirty glance had me wanting more. Even how she teased me with her swinging hips and her every daring wink mad me love her all the more. I don't understand how I had not seen it before. How I had not known that I loved her from the very beginning. And I mean the VERY beginning. When I had almost bed her that very first night, deep down I had known. A part of me hated that I had waited so long, but if I hadn't we would not be as in love as we are now.

She held tight to my hand as she dragged me to her room. I marveled in the way they fit perfectly, like we were born to be together, as if we were soul mates.

Only Missy and I could find each other halfway around the world.

When I came around from my thoughts we were at her bedroom door. She dragged me into her room roughly, slamming the door behind her.

"Do you know how sexy you are when you command a room like that?" She asked against my lips. She had me backed against the wall as she devoured my mouth.

I couldn't help myself. My hands cradled her bum as my lips began to work with hers. There were moments when she and I both were about at our boiling point, and I could tell this was going to be another one of those make-out sessions. She pressed into me harder and I could fill her firm breasts push into me through my uniform. The sensation brought a moan to my lips.

"I love you, Eric." She whispered while now working on my neck. It was hard to describe the way those three little words made me feel. They heightened every nerve in my body, even made my boy rise. Absentmindedly, I grinded into her, making her gasp.

"Oh, God, I love you, too." And it was true. Ever single word I spoke to her was true anymore. The only thing I hid from her was how much I needed her. I just didn't want to sound like a sap.

She stopped assaulting my neck and pulled away. Still, after a whole month, I had not gotten over that twinkle in her eye. It had become a permanent fixture in her, and yet it still took my breath away and made my heart ache with longing.

Turning around she pulled her curly dark blond hair to one side. "Would you unzip me?"

I took in her fitted pencil skirt and shirt dress. It showed her every cure even from behind. If I had never seen her half naked it would easily be the sexist thing I had ever seen. Placing myself inches behind her, I let my touch be soft and gentle as I undid the zipper. The fine silk of her skin shimmered in the soft light and it was all I could do not to press soft loving caresses there. Moving it lower, I found she was sporting a white lacy bra and I had to stop myself for a second before continuing. It ended just

at the small of her back where her two hip dimples showed slightly.

"There you go, and I will see you tomorrow night?" I reminded her, my voice husky with need.

"Would not miss it for the world, but are you going to stay with me tonight?" The hope in her eyes flattered me.

"Not tonight, babe. I think we should give it a rest. Plus, you will be with you father tomorrow and I will be dealing with those dead brains." Cupping her face with my hands I placed a light kiss of her soft plump lips. "I love you."

"I love you, too. See you tomorrow." I left before I could see her shimmy out of her dress.

Tomorrow was her birthday. For some odd reason she didn't want me to know, but I had a feeling it had to do with her humble ways. She didn't want anything, because she had all she needed. But I had something planned. Something big planned for my babe. She was worth every penny I spent.

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So? What do you think?

Vote, comment, fan, and even tell a friend.

Please and Thanks.

Chapter 53

The Art of Hope (53)

Chapter 53

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"Hey Dad," I said while bringing him into a bear hug.

"Good morning, sweetheart. I hope twenty-one is not being too hard on you." I gave him a smile before sitting down on the patio chair.

"No, not too hard." I smiled at him. Lately I had been doing that a lot. Smiling was second nature to me now, and I never had to force it. It seemed as if every morning was a blessing and a new chance to love more than the day before.

"You seem happy." Dad noted, as he took a sip of his coffee.

"I am." My mind drifted off to Eric, wondering how he was handling the awful men. Then drifting to our dinner tonight, and what I was going to wear.

"Well, I need to be off soon, and I am sure your friends and mother will be calling, so here." He slid an envelope across the table. "Happy Birthday, sweetheart."

"What's this?" I could not stop myself form feeling spoiled rotten. I never was one to get everything I wanted but now I didn't even have to ask.

"Just a little something I thought would brighten a rainy day." My father smirked and I could not hold back a giggle. His smirk was almost identical to my Eric's. Funny that my own father and boyfriend act so much alike.

I slowly opened the envelope to see plane tickets. Five plane tickets, one for each of my closest friends and family. "I know your mother is seeing someone, so I put one in there for him as well. I know they had

plans today, but one day they won't or they will make time to come see you. I think it is about time they know. Don't you?" The hint of sadness was heartbreaking. My father still loved my mother, and the fact that she had moved on killed him. But, he was the type of man to let her go, all because he loves her.

"Oh, Dad." I jumped up and ran over to him full speed, tears of joy brimming at my eyes. "I love you, Dad."

He pulled me into his lap, as if I was a child and not a twenty-one year old woman. "I love you, too. My Mary Elizabeth. I love you, too."

We just sat there, hugging one another. It was nice to have this time with my dad. I had missed out on it all my life, and it was pleasing to know that, even thought he had missed my childhood, he still loved me and wanted to be a part of my life.

"Now, I have something I wanted to talk about." He cleared his throat, and I took my seat again.

"Yes..."

"About you and Eric." I gulped not knowing where this could be going. He continued, "You two seem to be getting quite serious. Before I introduce you to this country, I need to know if this is just a fling or if this could last. The public loves Eric, and if it seems that you and him are having an affair the public will not fallow you." The words struck me.

"Dad, I don't know if you know this or not, but I love him. I love him too much for this to be a fling. I know he loves me. I'm just not sure how much." I smiled at my father and he smiled back. I felt the twisted uneasiness of uncertainty.

His eyes twinkled, "That is was I wanted to hear, sweetheart." Then he patted my leg, "I need to get going now. Do have a wonderful birthday."

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I called Annie. She was so excited to be coming over here when they all had the time. I held off on calling my mother. That was a talk I was not sure how to have. What would I say? 'Hey mom, my father, your long lost lover, found me and he is a King and now I am going to fallow in his footsteps.' I can't see it being

that simple. And besides, it could send her off into another downward spiral, and I was not ready to lose my mother, again.

A knock from the door brought me out of my thoughts.

"Come in." I shout.

"Good afternoon, Miss Mary," she nodded her head.

"Good afternoon." I smiled at her. "What is that?" She was holding, what looked to be, a dress box.

"Eric wanted me to drop this off for you. He wants you to wear it tonight, Miss Mary."

"Thank you." Taking to box I scattered to my bed, ready to rip it open.

Pulling the little blue ribbon off a little note feel to the ground. I picked it up to read.

Dear Babe,

Happy Birthday. Wear this tonight? I picked it out myself. I will meet you in the lobby at 7:00.

I love you,

Eric.

A goofy grin lit up my face, as I studied the note. Who knew Eric could be so romantic? And who knew he could make me blush so red even though he was not around? "I love you, too." I whispered, the goofy grin still plastered on my face.

I sat the note down carefully on my bedside table. I did not want to lose it. Who knew when he would be off on a business trip and I would need to know he loved me? Call me crazy but that's how I felt.

I turned my attention to the box on my bed. He had bought me a dress, and on top of that had picked it out himself. It was impossible to hold in a chuckle at the thought of Eric shopping.

Slowly and carefully I pulled the lid off. Excitement consuming me in a fashion that made my body ache to jump up and down. As the lid inched of a baby blue material presented itself. I gasped at the colors that exploded from the box. Baby blue matched with a faint lavender color tickled my sight making me giddy with joy.

I pulled out the dress letting it dangle in my hands. I was breathtaking. Simply, beautiful. It was a vintage looking cocktail dress. My guess was inspired by the 1920's. Synching directly under the bust with a baby blue flower print material it covered lavender mixed with, yet again, more baby blue fabric. Eric could not have picked a better dress. Only he would have known that I liked the simple yet elegant look.

I knew at that moment that I had to do this dress justice. I glanced at the clock quickly discovering I only had two hours to get ready. With great haste I ran to the fitting room in hopes of finding someone to do my hair and maybe a quick wax of my eyebrows. Something told me I should look perfect tonight.

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I was late. Of all things, I was late. Mike was still working on my hair while Tony painted French tips on my fingernails. I was already ten minutes late, and it was killing me to wait.

"Have you ever heard of 'fashionably late'?" Tony joked taking his sweet time on my nails.

I just rolled my eyes and added, "I don't care about that stuff. What if he has a reservation?" I whined.

"He won't care about how late you are when he sees how stunning you are. Plus, this is our happy birthday makeover, so we will take all the time we want." Mike stated his tone sick with joy.

"Guys, please hurry. I don't want him to get the wrong idea." I pouted my lips, on the verge of actually crying. I wanted to be with Eric. I hadn't seen him in twenty four hours, and this surprise of his was killing me.

"Hold still! You're going to make us take longer the more you move." Tony huffed. I settled myself down by thinking of the beautiful dress I was wearing. Eric had even got all the measurements right. The dress fit snug enough not to fall off, yet loose enough to move around.

"It's beautiful isn't it?" I smiled.

"Yes honey. And I much as I am shocked to say this, I will. That man is a keeper." Tony patted my shoulder and then stepped away, finished with my nails.

"You're right, Tony. Any man that can pick out that dress and is not gay is a keeper." Mike joked before curling the last piece of hair around my face. "Done!"

I was out of the chair at once. Grabbing my necklace I partially ran out the door.

"Have fun!" They both yelled after me.

As I approached the stairs I slowed until I stopped, wanting to catch my breath as well as a peek at Eric. He paced back and forth while correcting an unseen ruffle in his jacket. He checked is watch before running his hand through his perfectly gelled hair making it messy, just the way I like it. He was far from perfect, with little habits that some would find flaws. Those habits only drew me closer to him, made me love him even more.

I decided to descend the stairs when he checked his watch again. He must have heard my heels clacking against the dark wood because as I reached the first step our eyes met. His going wide with, what I guessed was, wonder. His silver-grey pools drinking in my figure, starting at the hair piled on top of my head with little pieces of dark blond framing my face

before slowly racking over my dress and even down to my shoes. When he was done surveying our eyes met again. I took another step to him, not letting my gaze dropped. We never said a word but I knew what he was thinking. All his emotion shown through is inviting eyes. Love, beauty, luck, happiness, joy, and love again, they were all there. And he didn't have to be a rocket scientist to know what mine were saying.

Before I knew it I was at the bottom, Eric taking my hand. He pulled it up to his lips before placing a delicate kiss there. We stared into each other's eyes for what seemed like hours.

"Sorry I'm late. Tony and Mike got a hold of me." He didn't say anything so I continued, "Thank you for the dress. It's beautiful."

Still nothing so I decided to close my trap and stare some more. If was not uncomfortable, it was the fact that I wanted to hear his voice and I wanted to hear those three little words that set my word on fire.

"I love you. And you look..." He let his eyes do the talking again unable to find the words.

"You picked out the dress all I had to do was wear it. And Eric, I love you, too."

With a quick kiss on the lips, we were out the door and into the limo.

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I gasped when we entered the little Italian restaurant where we had our first date. He must have rented the whole things out, not a soul, other than staff, was in it.

We had not said much the enter time, just sat in a comfortable silence. Only speaking with our eyes. The waiter sat down a basket of breadsticks breaking our silent 'I love you's.

"I can't get over this dress Eric. Where did you find it?" I asked, daintily pinching off some bread.

"A man never tells his secret." He winked and we were off into a playful banter.

I was getting hungry but the waiter never came to take our orders. Mentioning my frustration would just ruin the mood, so I just kept my mouth shut.

"The men at the meeting today were very much respectful. I think you put some fear into them." He chuckled, that pride shining in his eyes.

This caused me to giggle and him to grin even wider. At that moment the waiter came out with our plates, and I wondered what we were have, seeing as I didn't order anything. When he placed the plates in front of us I discovered that Eric had them make the meals we had that day. He had remembered everything. The beam on my face was so bright I was sure I lit up the room.

"Happy Birthday, Missy." He smiled down at me.

"How did you find out anyway?" I asked before taking a sip of soup.

"I have my ways, no need to spoil all my secrets."

We finished our dinner in happy chatter, discussing everything under the sun. It was amazing how we still found new things to talk about. Like how Eric had a secret love for the movie "Dirty Dancing" and "Grease." I could not help but fall even more in love with him for it.

A small cake was brought out with one candle on it. It was the same type of cake that I had made with Eric once before. I took note of how he planned every detail of this night engraving it into my memory so to never forget.

"Happy Birthday," he said again while he scooped up some cake to feed me. I laughed as he put it to my mouth.

I took the fork from him and feed him next, and then feed myself. After his chuckles subsided he went eerie quiet, rubbing his hands together as if he was nerves. I tried to ignore it, not sure how to address this 'problem.'

"Missy, I-"he stood up and walked over to me fiddling with something in his jacket pocket.

"Yes?" I asked bewildered by what he was doing until he got down on one knee. I sucked in a quick breath of air that cut short of reaching my lungs. Was he really going to do this?

"I love you, Missy. I don't know how it happened and sometimes that scares me shitless, but I do." Our eyes

met, mime pooling with unshed tears, his shining with hope.

"Damn, I had this whole speech planned out, but I just can't remember it." He ran his hand through his hair looking just like a nerves schoolboy. "Well, here it goes..." I fiddled with his pocket again pulling out a small black, velvet box.

"Will you marry me?" His voice was ruff and gravelly like it took everything in him to say it.

My heart speed on in a new joyous rhythm. I opened my mouth but that one little word would not come out, and on top of it all I was on the verge of tears. He opened the box to reveal a stunning diamond engagement ring. In intricate design on the band made it known it was old, while the incredibly large diamond in the middle made it known it was expensive.

"And I thought I was going to get a puppy or something..." Out of all the things to say, that was what found its way out of my mouth.

Eric flinched, "Well, I can always get you a puppy." Guilt consumed my stupid mind.

"I don't want a stupid puppy." I said shyly. "I want you."

"Is that a yes?" The innocence in his voice was adorable.

"Yes, Eric. I want to marry you."

He slide the elegant ring onto my finger telling the world that I was now his before pulling me into a crushing huge and swinging me around in a circle. The unshed tears now shedding, and his voice whispering 'I love you's the whole time.

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Again, not much to say about this chapter.

Vote, comment, fan. Please and Thanks.

Chapter 54

The Art of Hope (54)

Chapter 54

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That is her ring ---- >

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Eric's POV

Her head rested against my bare chest as she twirled the ring on her finger. I knew she was awake, but I was not sure she knew I was. We had slept like this so many time I could not count, but this time it was different. This time she was my fiancée. Shivers ran

down my back from the word. God, I loved this woman.

I felt her lips pull up into a smile against my chest. She had been smiling all night, even in her sleep. Now I felt ridiculous for being afraid she would say no to me. But the fear was there. After all, we had only been dating for about a month. Yes, we had kissed and slept in the same bed plenty of times before, but we had only been dating a short time. That made me afraid it was too soon for her, but the waiting was slowly killing me. Luckily, she felt the same.

"Tell me why you love me?" She asked. Obviously, now I knew she knew I was awake. I drew in a deep breath not wanting to sound like a sappy, needy man. But she would always get what she wants, at least form me she would.

"You're caring, sweet, lovable, honest, charming, beautiful, sexy yet still adorable at the same time, and you smell so incredible all the time. You..." I was at a loss for words. I knew I loved her, yet I could not put it into the sentence she so very much wanted to

hear. "You're special, Missy. You seem to know me like no other person does. The crazy thing is you don't even have to try. I get lost in your eyes just from a quick glance. And, you're the only woman I have ever bedded without actually bedding." I chuckled. "Why I love you? I don't really know if that's even a fair question to ask. All I know is that I love you and I want to have the right to wake up with you in my arms every day."

I felt a drop of wetness run down my chest to my abs before it was quickly brushed away by her hand. "Sorry," She mumbled through tears.

"What did I say now?" I joked, knowing that it was a happy cry.

She giggled, "I just love you so much that it hurts." I knew exactly how she felt.

I pulled her chin up so to get a look at the woman I will one day marry. "I love you, babe. Now give me a kiss." I said seductively as I pressed my lips to her forever inviting ones.

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"We should tell my father." She said before swinging our hands and continuing, "I wonder what he will think." She smiled despite herself.

Little did she know, her father already knew. I had asked him for her hand in marriage before I even knew she would say yes. It was the chivalrous thing to do, and that was how I was raised. The King was ecstatic when I asked, and had run off to make plans for our wedding. I thought that was a mother's job but he was ready and willing, so I kept my mouth shut. He was so happy he had already set the date and bought the plane tickets for her friends and family. And, being a clever man, gave them to her on her birthday. Now I was smiling despite myself.

"Do you think he will be in his office?" I nodded, knowing he has probably been waiting in there all morning. She picked up her speed, almost skipping with giddy joy.

I tugged on her arm to stop her, and she slowed while turning to face me. "What?" She asked while studying my intense gaze.

"I just love you." I said while pulling her closer and burying my face in her neck where the, all familiar, smell on lavender engulfed my senses. She wrapped he arms around my waist and we just stood there loving one another. Sometimes it was everything I could do not to lock us in my room and cuddle up to her for hours. Just touching her had me falling hard.

"Okay, let's go." She pulled away that smile still plastered on her face. It was obvious she was holding back her excitement.

She knocked on the office door while I stared at her. It was something that I now do most of the time. I just can't help myself. She's just so beautiful and captivating and deserves to be stared at.

"Hello you two. Please, come in." The King said while winking at me. I smiled a nod to the ring on her finger and his face lit up.

"Hey dad, you have a second? I need to talk to you." Her hand was still firmly in mine as she walked in.

"Of course, dear." We followed him into the office taking the two seats across from his desk. "Now, what brings the two of you here?"

Missy took in a deep breath as if she was nervous, "Dad, Eric asked me to marry him."

"And you said?" He asked, a hint of humor twinkling in his eyes.

"I said yes." As she spoke the words she looked at me with so much love it almost hurt. I wanted to pull her close and just hold her, but now was not the time.

"Well, that's what I said." He chuckled, causing Missy's face to scrunch in confusion.

"Dad, what are you talking about?" She asked, and this time both the King and I chuckled.

"Eric asked me three days ago if he could have your hand in marriage. I said yes, and then I started to prepare. Those tickets have a date on them. The date of your wedding and the week before. I hope you don't mind, but I figured with everything you have going on you would not mind if I set the date." The King lowered his head as if to be ashamed.

"You already set the date?" She screamed, the King and I both flinched.

"We can always reschedule..." I had never seen him cower in fear, but here he was, cowering.

"Oh dad, I didn't mean it like that." She hurried over to him taking him into a big hug. "I was just excited that's all." He relaxed, hugging her back. The picture of the two of them hugging was priceless. I had never seen the King so... gentle. Hell, I have never been so gentle. I guess Missy just has a way with us royals.

"It's set for June forth. That is a month and three weeks away. But don't worry, it's plenty of time." I saw her eyes widen.

"So soon?" She whispered and I flinched this time. I was so ready to be her husband. I wanted to be everything for her. I wanted to give her a family and be her family. I wanted to her to have my last name. In all my wanting, I had forgotten that this was not about what I wanted, but about what SHE wanted.

"We don't have to Missy. We can take as much time as you need or want. I never meant to rush you." At that

moment I regretted telling The King I wanted a fast wedding.

"Oh Eric, it's not that, it's just well, I was not expecting all this. Just give me some time to think. But I have always wanted a June wedding." She smiled and I returned hers with a weak one.

"Okay kids, I have paper work to do. If you want to change the date let me know soon. We have announcements to send out."

We both nodded and turned to leave. As we stepped through the door Missy was on me. Kissing me softly yet harshly.

"I love you, Eric. And I can't wait to be Mrs. Mary Elizabeth Delamater."

I had never heard her say it out loud. And even though I had thought about her having my last name, it was different hearing it said.

"I love you, too, babe. And I am so ready for you to have my last name I would fly to Los Vegas right now."

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Missy's POV

"No he didn't," Annie screamed through the phone. I had just told her that Eric proposed to me.

"Yes he did. He took me to where we had our first date, he bought me a dress, and he rented out the whole restaurant!" My voice inched louder as I spoke.

"Oh my God, Oh my God, Oh my God." She kept saying over and over. "That is SO sweet. And here I thought that he was just a player. Missy, you got yourself I good one. I must say, I am a little jealous." She giggled, as I heard Jason yell something in the background.

I laughed. "Well, I need to call my mother. I will let you know about the dates soon. Dad said he already had it planned for June." I still didn't know how to feel about having my own wedding dates planned, but it was sweet none the less.

"You're so lucky. I wish someone had set my dates for me." I could hear her pout through the phone.

"Bye, Annie."

"Call me soon. I can't wait to help you plan, even if it is over the phone." I laughed then hung up.

"Now your mother..." I heard Eric behind me.

"Yep..." Now, after hiding it for months, I had to tell my mother about everything. "I should have told her so much sooner." I sighed, frustrated with myself.

"No, you never knew that you would rekindle this relationship with her. And it's hard to tell your mother about your father. Especially when your father is a King." He wrapped his arms around me and I smothered my face in his chest.

"I love you." I sighed, my words muffled in his chest.

"What was that? I don't think I heard you." I felt his hand rise, probably to his ear in mock humor.

He could always make me giggle. "Shut up." I stuck my tongue out at him and he growled causing me to snort.

"Don't you tell me to shut up." He lunged at me but I was already half way to the bed.

Screaming, I jumped on my bed, right before he tackled me, pinning me to it. There was a fierce look in his eyes, as if he could just devour me. "Say it again?" He basically demanded.

"I love you." And just like that we were kissing. His hands roamed my body and his lips worked with mine. "Okay," I giggled when he bit my neck softly. "I need to call my mother."

"Fine..." He huffed. "I need to get some things done anyways."

Panic stuck me, forcing me to grab his arm. "Don't go..." I dropped my sentence not wanting to sound like a needy baby.

"I really need to get some stuff done." His oversized hand cupped my face.

"But..."I gulped, "I need you." No matter how hard I tried I could not meet his eyes.

"Okay, I'll stay." He said as he pulled me into a hug. "I will never leave you when you need me."

"The same thing goes for you." I whispered trying to hide how much he words excited me. That's why I love him so much.

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"Missy? Oh, happy birthday." My mother cheered joyfully into the phone.

"Thanks mom." I smiled while sitting on Eric's lap. He played with my hair, which was extremely comforting and a little distracting.

"Now what did you need? I was just getting ready to head out." She still seemed cheerful, and I hated that I was about to give her the shock of her life.

"Well..." I paused. "First off, I'm getting married."

A long silence.

"To that model look-alike?" Out of all the things to say... Her little outburst reminded me of mine and the whole 'I thought I was getting a puppy' deal.

"Yes, mom, to the model look-alike." Eric winked, still toying with my hair.

"I'm so happy for you dear. I can tell that man loves you." She sounded sincere but the true excitement from her was not there. Not that I expected it, we were just getting to know one another.

"Mom, there's more..." I let it hang for a second and when she said nothing I began. "I have been living with my father this whole time. He found me. And well, he's a King, and I'm fallowing in his footsteps. Oh yes, and Eric's a prince."

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So I left this off with a little tiny cliffy. Sorry. :D Just couldn't help myself.

And very sorry it took so long to update. I just started working over 40 hrs a week and was so tired I could not function when I got home.

Vote, comment, and fan. Please and Thanks.

Chapter 55

The Art of Hope (55)

Chapter 55

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Three weeks and four days. It's been three weeks and four days and my mother has yet to call me. I remember that day as if it happened yesterday. She just hung up on me and now won't answer my calls. Left me, again. I should have known better. Eric told me she had not changed, that she was just putting on a show. She had fooled me, again.

"One, two, three. One, two, three. One - Miss Mary Elizabeth keep up with your steps. I won't be having royalty messing up there steps on the first dance."

The dance instructor cackles as Eric leads me in the dance. I felt a little more reassured when he pulled me closer to him.

I was faintly aware of his lips at my ear. "What is up, babe? Do you need a break?" Worry seemed to be his main characteristic lately. He worried over every little thing. And I mean every little thing. Yesterday I stubbed my toe on the dresser and he ran over and picked me up to carry me to the bed. I still think he wanted to just hold me and my "pain" was his way to get what he wanted. Before I knew it I was smiling to myself.

"I'm fine." I said flatly, my mood turning sour again and wanting to just go to sleep. I was far more angry with myself than I was with my mother. I had been the one stupid enough to believe she had changed. That she would not leave me, again.

"One, two - Mary, keep up. He can't drag you across the floor. This is your wedding. If you want to look like fools, so be it. Take my name off the training contract and find a new instructor."

I shook my head, clearing it. One, two, three, I focused my steps and felt my tension loosen when Eric's hand ventured lower.

"No, no, no. Keep your arm firmly on her waist. And you, you look as if you are a zombie." And that is exactly how a felt today; A mad angry zombie. My mother's abandonment heightened by my monthly gift.

"I think we have practiced enough today." Eric's voice was as soft as a feather, letting me know that he was worried, again, but a hint of something else was there. And that, was something he was working very hard to hide in front of her.

He dragged me out of the dance hall and then pushed me aggressively against the wall. "Do you know how fucking sexy you are when you're angry?" His hands were running down my body going straight for my bottom. He loves his hands on my bum, and quite frankly, I love his hands there, too. With one squeeze I moaned while wrapping my arms around his sturdy neck.

"Damn, I love you so much." He whispered in my ear. I would have whispered it back if he hadn't of started nibbling on my ear causing my words to stick in my throat. I couldn't contain myself either and my hands ran down his chest feeling the man I was going to marry. He was mine, everything about him was mine, and the feelings it made me feel were almost unbearable at times.

Our lips still hadn't meet but he had me squirming from his touch. "I think we should head to my room." He grunted while I felt at his burly shoulders.

It didn't hit me at the time, but when we were standing in front of his door, it did. He wanted to have sex, to 'show me how much he loves me' as he'd once put it. "Eric, we need to talk." I stuttered, afraid of how he would take my rejection. I wanted to please him, I really did, but I wanted to wait.

His smile stayed in place but I could see his heart fall to his feet. I grabbed his hand and dragged him in, ready to break his spirits even more.

He sat on the edge of his bed and I sat straddling him, wrapping my legs around his frame. We had never

sat like this before but I felt now was the time. It was intense both physically and emotionally. And, it forced him to look at me and to wrap his arms around me.

"It's not that I don't want you, Eric. Trust me I want you." He smiled at that and it encouraged me to continue. "You're extremely sexy and determined, handsome and caring and you love me, of all people." I played with the first button of his shirt, thinking of how to word my next sentence. "It's just... well, we have made it this long and I just wanted to... wait until our honeymoon." I blushed knowing how ridiculous I sounded. I had already lost my virginity and had a miscarriage on top of that. The whole idea of waiting was stupid, but that is what I wanted.

There was a long silence, but he reassured me that he was thinking by rubbing circles on my back. It was so comfortable I laid my head in the crook of his neck.

"Okay, you're right." He said while still rubbing my back.

"Really?" If I were a dog you would be able to see my ears perk up.

"Anything for you. Plus, I can't wait until I get to see you that night, and if it will heighten our first time then I'm in. Babe, I want to make it the best night of your life." He gave me a mischievous smile.

"And how, Babe, are you going to do that?" I asked, playing along.

"Well, first I'm going to kiss you on the lips." He gave me a soft kiss. "Then I'm going to run my fingers along your collar bone," his fingers traced my skin making me shiver, "right before they explore your exquisite breasts." Daringly, he ran a lone finger between those said breasts. Although he never touched the skin, I could feel the burning heat of desire. "Lastly, I'm going to take hold of your hips and slowly, so slowly it will kill you, enter." His eyes held a fierce look as if he had thought about it many times. Thankfully, he was oblivious to my dazed expression. I was on the verge of an orgasm just from thinking about me and Eric, together, in a bed.

Eric had never talked so intently about having sex before, and it showed me how much he was holding

back, how hard he was working to keep his hands to himself. And I was being selfish.

"Missy, I don't mind waiting. Promise." He said before brushing a stray curl from my face. "I love you."

"I love you, too." I smiled, happy to be living and loving. Who needs a mother anyways?

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Eric had put me in a better mood, and I was a little ashamed that I had acted so childish over my mother. I knew better. I rushed down the stars looking for Mike and Tony when I bumped into none other than Jace.

It was the first time I had seen him in months and it was awkward as hell. We shared a glance before his eyes ventured to my no long pregnant tummy. Guilt consumed me completely. I should have told him. He should have been the first to know, even if he had cheated. That gave me no right to hide something like this from him.

His eyes met mine, angry and knowing. "So you're marring him?" His voice was rough and aggravated.

I couldn't make myself confirm it, but he knew the truth. I only wanted to say what I should have said a long time ago. "I lost the baby." It had been long enough for me to get over it. And for the most part, I somewhat had, but my voice had broken on the last word.

The softness that once lived in Jace's eyes was back, he looked utterly heartbroken. Just as heartbroken as I had felt. "What?" His voice was now softly rough with enormous heartbreak. As much wrong as he had done to me, he had loved the unborn child just as much as I. Water glistened in his eyes, and the thought of him crying nearly ripped me apart, bringing unshed tears to my eyes as well.

"It's gone. I don't know what happened..." Sobs were breaking through my strong barrier. "I'm sorry." The words were hardly comprehensible through my cries.

"Missy, don't you dare apologize to him. He is the one that should be apologizing. He put you through all the stress." I didn't have to turn to know it was Eric. I ran to him, just wanting to feel his arms around me.

With my head tucked into Eric's chest I glanced over at Jace. His eyes held so much regret it almost killed me. I would never forgive him, but at least now I knew that he knew what he did was horrible wrong.

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I am Soooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo Sorry that it is so late. I had so much to do and so many things that I have still not gotten done. Please forgive me?

Chapter 56

The Art of Hope (56.1)

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Chapter 56.1

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First off, I HATE breaking the chapters up like this, but it is just taking me so long and I hate having to make you all wait. SO here is the first part of chapter 56.

P.S. I am very sorry for the wait. Really, I am. I promise it won't be more than a week again. Promise!

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Eric's POV

The warm breeze from the east warmed my skin with the help of the sun, as the mornings crisp smell woke my senses. Each day drew me nearer to what will be the biggest day of my life - marrying Missy. I was ready to hand over everything, ready to bend over backward, and to promise my life to her. She was my only reason to live. The only reason to wake up in the morning was to see her face - not that a slept every night. Even those sleepless nights where no long restless, thanks to her. I would watch as she slept peacefully in my arms. To me, it was the safest place to have her - far away from the people that bring her pain.

I was aware of soft footstep padding across the patio. There was no use in me turning. I knew it was her. Confirming my thoughts her arms wrapped around my middle and her head rested against my bare back. Shivers of pure pleasure ran throughout me as her warm breath fanned across the skin there. Every touch she administered to me sent my heart into overdrive. So, this is love, I thought happily.

"Did you sleep well?" She asked her voice soft with sleep.

"No, someone drooled on me all night." I teased.

"I did not." I could hear the edge of anger in her voice, but she was still lost in morning sleep to enforce it. And even then, she pulled me closer forcing my smile to stretch even farther across my face. The things she did to me.

"You did, but only a little." A deep sigh fanned from her lips, warming the skin of my back once more.

"Why could you not sleep?" I could hear the muffled worry in her voice.

"I was only thinking. Nothing awful and I didn't say it was a bad night." How could it be? Missy was in my arms the whole time.

"Pinch me." She whispered softly, and curiosity fluttered through my heart.

"What?" I chuckled as she buried her face deeper into my back.

"I have to be dreaming." At that I had to turn and lift her chin up. Her cheeks were lit with a faint pink making her look even more beautiful. My breath caught in my throat for a second.

"You're not dreaming. I'm right here, and I always will be." She smiled while opening her eyes. That's when I saw it - fear. She was scared over something, and I was terrified she would hand over that ring and tell me it was too soon. I tried to fight back the sinking of my heart, but gravity had its way. "Don't be scared." I crocked out.

"How can I not be? I will be Queen soon, and sometimes, when I am with you, I completely forget that there will be people depending on me." Sighing in relief, I pulled her into me. She wasn't scared of being with me, but of ruling.

"Don't be." I whispered, rocking her back and forth with me. My hands felt their way to the small of her back as I pulled her into a slow dance.

Instantly she tensed, took in a tight breath of air, and pulled away slightly. "Not now," She chuckled, "those dance lessons have my butt muscles in a bind."

Not being able to help myself, I chuckled. "Would you like me to work those knots out?" I questioned.

"Maybe that would help." I couldn't help but fall harder for her. She was everything I could ask for. I mean, how many women would ask for an ass rub? Not that it mattered, because Missy did and she practically begged for it.

I let my fingers trail down her back and rest in the dip right before her voluptuous bottom. She couldn't hide the smile from her eyes, even though she tried. I only beamed at her because it wouldn't matter if she let me touch her ass or not, it mattered that she had let me touch her heart.

"I love you." I whispered, because no matter how many times I told her it always felt the same, like floating in a sky of pure joy.

We spoke with our eyes for a moment, not needing words to know what the other was thinking. For us it seemed that those three little words didn't say enough. She could see down to my very soul, and I could care in the least. I loved her and she knew everything about me, so I had nothing to hide.

Breaking our voiceless conversation, I let my hands grasp her ass. It was impossible to stop the moan of delight. Her giggle forced me to chuckle myself as she stood on her tippy toes to wrap her arms around my neck. The action only firming her already perfect bum and again, making me moan.

"I really should go..." She said, nothing in her tone told me she wanted to leave so I continued.

"Can't you cancel?" I begged, wanting her to stay with me.

"We only have a week and five days until the wedding... I don't think Tony and Mike would let my skip this fitting. They want this dress perfect. Plus, we have to talk to Anne while we work on it. She is coming down in five days. Not to mention the fact that we have to work a time in for my bachelorette party. They won't let me do it the night before the wedding because they think it will put bags under my eyes." Her voice had picked up to the speed of sound.

Taking my finger I shushed her. "We will get through this. I'll be with you the whole time. And they're

right; it would put bags under your beautiful eyes." I ended it giving her a kiss on the forehead. She visibly relaxed making me proud I had that kind of effect on her.

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I know, short and boring, but I had to get SOMETHING out.

Chapter 57

The Art of Hope (56.2)

Okay so I had this finished yesterday, but I just realized that all my goals are completed SOOOOO I added a whole bunch of stuff that was not going to be in the story. :D I rather love this chapter.... Even if Eric's not in it. D:

Chapter 56.2

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Missy's POV

"It's about time you got here girl." Tony yelled at me the second I stepped into the room. I sighed in

frustration thinking of what I had left behind. Eric in his bed without me, the idea just felt all wrong.

"Will you stop thinking about him? You will have all the time in the world to roll around in the sheets later. Right now, we are working on your dress, so strip down." Tony ordered and I chuckled to myself.

"You do know that we haven't slept together yet, right?" I asked with a smirk the size of Texas playing on my lips. I knew everyone in the castle was thinking we were having fully fledged, animal sex, every night. I let them think what they wanted, because I knew what was truly going on.

Tony's face turned hard as stone, an image of shock plastered there for, what seemed like, forever.

"Here it is! Finally finished. I can't wait to see it o-" Mike stopped dead in his tracks after seeing Tony. Glancing at me quickly he asked, "What's with him?"

I didn't answer him. I just couldn't keep my eyes off of the blinding white dress in his hands. My dress, finished, finally. This would be the first time that I would try it on. Excitement pulsed throughout my

body, even to my fingertips, as I resisted the urge to jump up and down.

I had to face it. As much as I didn't want to be pampered and treated like royalty, it was nice to have the dress of my dreams. It was simple yet elegant princess style, a style that could be found in the cheapest of shops, but it had a little touch of royalty to it with its intercut designs and flowing satin skirt.

Tony seemed to gather himself. "Oh well, Missy here just informed me that she and Eric-the=sex-machine have yet to sleep together."

"You mean to tell me that Missy hasn't jumped him yet?" Mike's voice sounded appalled, like I had disgraced all of mankind.

"Okay guys. It's not that big of a deal. I mean, he and I have worked it out. We want it, well mainly me, to be special. He is willing to wait until we get married." I blushed of all things to do. It still sounded undeniably stupid. I had already had sex and got impregnated. All the rules had been broken, but still.

"How could you not eat him up?" Tony screamed.

"Yeah, he is like a walking God." Mike added.

I chuckled because I was very aware of his godliness. I had felt his godliness and his manliness. I had felt his everything. Well, except him inside me, but that was a whole different story.

"Can I try the dress on now? Please?" I begged, not liking to being in their spotlight.

"Not until you tell us why!" Tony demanded causing me to sigh. I knew I was not getting out of this.

"Well, sex seems to screw everything up for me, and I just wanted to know that he is willing to be with me forever. Yes, I know that marriage is just a piece of paper. And, he is doing this in front of a Kingdom so I am sure he is positively going to stay with me forever..." I trailed off feeling stupid. I knew he loved me and it was just sex. Sex is nothing big, nothing important really. It was just a natural thing that even animals do. So why is it killing me so much inside that I am denying it of him?

"That's so stupid. That man is never going to leave you. Even if you gain two hundred pounds and grow a mustache. He would follow you to the ends of the earth. I don't think you really see the love in his eyes." Mike scolded me.

"I know... but that is how I feel. I lean from my mistakes. Its better this was whether it is right or wrong." I stood my ground. "So, can I try it on or not?"

"Yeah, Yeah. Now strip." Tony ordered and I pulled of my shirt and pants. The giddy feeling of pure happiness was bubbling up to the surface once again.

Mike held the dress up so that I could see it fully. I stretched out my hand in order to feel the beauty of it. The beading was perfect as it set off the outline of the top. It was already curvaceous even though I was not in it, but it would not enhance my qualities too much. My fingers traveled down to the silky satin fabric and I smiled lightly. Eric would love this dress - even if it was too conservative.

"It's perfect." I whispered softly so not to destroy the mood.

"It is..." Mike joined in.

"Now put it on!" Tony yelled.

I laughed and they easily helped me into the dress. When the dress was in place I quickly unclasped my bra so to test the waters. Mike zipped me up and I sighed, revealing in the feeling of wearing this dress. It made me feel like a princess, for the first time.

"You're so beautiful." I could hear the smile in Mike's voice.

"No wonder sexy man fell for you. I mean, look at you!" Tony screamed in a girlish fashion, killing the mood once again.

I chuckled and opened my eyes. They were right, it was beautiful on me. I couldn't help but get watery eyed. I had come so far, from a broken home and heart to this. I was so lucky, so very lucky.

"No need to cry, sexy. We can change it." Mike said softly causing me to laugh out loud.

"No, no, it's not that." I smiled. "It's just, I'm so happy."

"Whatever you sap." Tony scolded, "Hurry and try it out, we have a call to make." That call was to my friend Annie who is helping me plan, what little a have to of, my wedding.

"Yeah, you're right."

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After dancing around in my dress for a minute, jumping, running, and everything else Tony and Mike seemed happy with the dress. It stayed in place the whole time, and it was reassuring to know that I would not be falling out in front of a Kingdom. Now we were off the call Annie.

"You know, I am actually not surprised that you and Eric have not done it." Mike said as we walked down the quiet hall.

"Really?" I had thought wrong about him. I was almost positive that everyone thought we were doing it.

"Yeah, I mean, think about it," He paused. "You are something new to Eric. He doesn't want to use you like the others, not that he would. He loves you, so he

wants his first time with you to be special too." Mike gave Tony a tender look. A look that had to mean that they had also shared something so special.

At one point in time it would have been impossible for me to understand how two men, or women, could love the other. But, after knowing Tony and Mike I can completely understand. They saw more in each other than they did any other person. And although, they never told me they were together, I could totally see it in their eyes.

"You know, I know, right?" I smirked as we walked down the long hallway to my room.

"What?" Panic flashed in both of their eyes before being masked with fake amusement.

"You don't have to hide your love from me. I don't mind. I love that you love each other even though so many people look down on it." I shrugged because that was the gosh-honest truth.

"I told you she knew..." Mike scolded and I just chuckled, happy to see they were not going to deny it.

"Yeah, yeah." Tony answered him.

"Missy, I can't wait to see you!" Annie cheered into the phone. The boys just laughed as I sat on the wing back chair.

"I can't wait to see you, either." I sighed. I really did miss her.

"Okay enough with the babbling, we have plans to make." Tony's voice was full of humorless business.

"You're right." Annie added. "I have sent out invites to everyone you wanted to come."

"The King has sent out some here as well. The colors are picked. The dishes are picked. The music is picked. All we need to do is the table arrangements." Mike added.

I groaned outwardly. "I can't do that alone. I hardly know any of these people. I'm going to have to get Eric to help me." I pouted thinking of how he was out enjoying his day while I sat here.

"He will, and I even think the King wanted to help. That shouldn't be too hard. All the royals, Kings and Queens, sit at the same table. Their children sit with one another. The only ones you will have to seat are

those that are not part of the royal family." Tony added, as if it was no big thing.

"This is such a pain." My mood did a sudden swing from all the stress and I felt water pull at my eyes.

"Okay!" Mike shouted, shocking all of us. "I think it's time for that special surprise we have for Missy."

My head bolted up. "Surprise?"

Tony laughed. "You just wait. You are going to love this. Come along Mikie sweets." I smiled at Tony's pet name for Mike, as they left the room.

Annie and I chatted about how married life would be. She said it was wonderful being married and that she loved have alone time every night. I quieted as the realization hit me. Eric and I would never have out alone time. We lived in a castle for goodness sakes. My father lived only one room away from me. Annie promised that everything would work out. She said "All you need is love." Well, she sang it in the Beatles voice making me chuckle lightly.

Intense giggles broke Annie and me from our conversation. Mike was the first to step out carrying clumps of material soon fallowed mby Tony.

"Let the fun begin!" Tony exclaimed and that's when I realized - they had brought lingerie shopping to me.

I knew I should have been embarrassed but the excitement was all I could feel. The thought of Eric and I sharing each other was beyond steamy. I wanted to have the perfect outfit for that night. And I needed a male's point of view, even if they were gay.

"I knew you would love the surprise!" Annie yelled, but not from the phone.

As I looked up there she stood with yet another hand full of fabric. I could control myself as I jumped up and pulled her into a monster of a hug. Although so many bad things happened within my lifetime, I couldn't help but feel like the luckiest girl around.

"Oh Annie... I missed you." She chuckled but hugged me back harder.

"Well, let's not get so emotional. We have important shopping to do." That's all she had to say for my mind to flip back to the subject at hand.

"Now," Tony began while flipping his hand out girlishly, "You can pick out from categories. We have more in the back room. The ones we have in our hands are our personal favorites."

"It all depends on what kind of night you want to have." Annie added. "If you want to have hot animal sex you want the skimpiest one you can find. If you want slow loving sex get something that covers you but doesn't slow things down too much. Also, color has a lot to do with it. The brighter the color the kinkier you want it. Unless it's white. White makes you seem innocent, pure, and well you know all that crap." She laughed, and I was the only one that knew why. Annie was into that kinky stuff. Not the really gross stuff with the whole role playing of a dragon princess and all, but she loved to tie her man to the bed and have her way with him, or be tied down herself. She said that being forbidden to touch him

caused the orgasm to be so much better. As for me, I have never tried it, so I wouldn't know.

"Well, as much as I would love to have hot animal sex with Eric it's our first time so I don't want that. And kinky is something you try when you need a change, so I guess I'm stuck with the covering, yet revealing lingerie." I shrugged trying to hide my excitement.

"Okay then here," Annie handed me over a black lacy cloth and shooed me into the back room.

I slipped off my clothing and pulled the thin see-through fabric on. It did cover everything, but when hit with the right light it was easy to see my every curve under it. Dark flower pattern's cover right over my nipples, I guess to tease the man. The G-string thong was completely see-through as well. Eric would eat me up in this I smiled as I stepped back out into the open room. Mike and Tony just nodded their heads but I knew it wasn't the one we were looking for.

"Nope, it looks great on you but it's just not you." She brought me another one and I was thrown into a changing frenzy.

Two hours later I had found the one for me, and here I stood in it. The guys and Annie had yet to see it but I knew it was the one we were looking for. It was a white fabric, something I shied away from, but this one just called my name. It was completely see-through, not even nipple flower coverings on it. It was a one peace, which I had never seen in lingerie before, and it laced all the way up the front. The criss-crossed lace up started just above my pelvic bone and then all the way up to my chest. I didn't synch it up all the way, leaving skin exposed in the middle. The thought of Eric slowly un-tying it nearly drove me crazy.

At the moment I didn't care if the others liked it, this is the one I was getting.

"Does it really take that long to put on lace up lingerie?" Tony yelled, I could hear the frustration in his voice.

"I'm coming." I squeaked as I entered the room.

It instantly became supper quiet and no one moved. I smiled, knowing what was going on in their heads.

"If I wasn't gay I would be all over you right now." Mike broke the silence. That made everyone of us break into hysteric giggles.

We spent the rest of the night talking about things, until Mike and Tony wanted to try on lingerie of their own. Annie and I made sure they kept their boxers on underneath, for our sake. We laughed as they pranced around in the skimpy underwear and at their lustful looks at one another. All in all, it was a wonderful day, and just what I needed to make everything better.

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So? Did you like? Tell me about it?

Vote, comment, and become a fan. :D

And thanks again to all of you who are still staying with me. It's almost over. We have come a long way.

Chapter 58

The Art of Hope (57)

Chapter 57

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"Can't we just stay together for our parties?" Eric whispered in my ear as he wrapped his arms around my middle from behind.

I smiled while I folded some of my things. Most of my belongings have found their way to his room. "You know we can't miss out on our parties. It's the second to last night we will be single."

I felt his breath fan on my neck causing me to shiver. "What if I want to be single with you?" His voice was

dark and full of seduction making me completely melt into his warmth.

I had to drop all of my clothes just to regain my balance and composure. He didn't give me time to come up with a witty answer before his lips pressed loving kisses on my neck. When he was done accelerating my heart rate he whispered my favorite three words.

"I love you." No man had ever made me feel this way. We had a connection so deep words were not even necessary.

"I love you, too." I smiled as I picked up the clothes I had dropped in our cuddling. Eric picked up his clothes putting them into his bag.

Tonight we're having our parties and tomorrow night we will be sleeping in different rooms of the castle. Two nights I would be without seeing him and the thought of it was killing me, as strange as it may sound. Eric and I had been sharing his room for a sold month now, if not more, so it just felt wrong to not be wrapped up in his arms every night.

When I was finished I carried my small luggage bag to the hallway. Tony, Mike, and Anne were taking me to some world famous spa for the night and next day. There I would be pampered with the best of them, and the day after I would be married to the most wonderful man I have ever met in my life.

"I have to get going before they leave without me." My voice conveyed otherwise and Eric picked up on just how much I wanted to stay with him.

His arms were around me in no time and I was pulled into a powerful kiss that did everything but kill me. His hands worked at my bottom, as they always did, and his lips caressed mine in a passion filled heat that should be like poison. His unending love for me was extremely refreshing and shown in every kiss like this. I broke it quickly, knowing that if I let him continue I really would be running late.

"Would you stay if I said I needed you?" He whispered seductively in my ear and an all too familiar heat ran through my lower body. If he only knew what those words did to me.

"Can't you hold out two more days?" I chuckled, trying to play off my need for him.

Luckily, he smiled back. "Only because I love you so damn much, babe."

Eric's POV

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I walked Missy to the door before we had to go our separate ways. I didn't want to leave and enjoy a night full of sluts and porno women, but that was what Fletcher had in store for me. I fell even more in love with Missy when she told me that she trusted me not to do anything. It was clear she did not like the idea of Fletcher taking me out for my party but she knew that she could not change who I am friends with.

Missy was giddy at my side as she smiled broadly. I couldn't wait to call her mine, to have her wear my last name, but most importantly, to begin my life with her.

As we neared the door to spread or separate ways, I wrapped her in my arms and just held her. She clung

to me for a good minute before giggling a pulling away. Her beautiful laugher rang in my ears causing me to beam at her.

I let my breath fan across lips for a second just to let her know that I wanted a serious kiss. She got my mood right off the bat and her eyes turned a smoldering green that did just about everything to me at once. It was funny how that one look had me lusting over her. I was about to attack her mouth when she made the first move, pulling my hair and running her lips across my jaw. The grunt of satisfaction I let out did not go unnoticed as she drug one thin hand down from my shoulder to rest on my chest. Then trailed her soft lips up and around to my ear.

"I love you, babe." Her seductive voice was almost impossible to not get excited about.

That was it. I lost all control and my hands went straight to her bum and I was kissing her with so much passion it literally made my heart swell so much it hurt and forced my breath to catch. Our mouths worked together as one while she smiled

against my lips. We were two of a kind brought together to make one. We were perfect for one another in every way and kissing her only proved that fact.

Jace's POV (Surprise!!!!)

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Emily had left me a note to meet her in the kitchen before we went out tonight. She was so young and innocent and I guess that was what made me fall in love with her. If someone asked why I loved her I don't think I could tell them. Love cannot be explained. It just happens. That's what I tried to explain to Missy.

I do still love Missy, but as a friend and nothing more. There was a time when I thought that I loved her, but that was just me loving the fact of being in love.

I know that I went about it all the wrong way. I should have told her. Sat down and talked it all out, and now it was too late for that. I don't regret sleeping with Emily, because that was how I found

real love, but it had crushed my best friend. How was I supposed to live with all this guilt?

As I came down the stairs I froze. There they were, Missy and Eric, doing what they always do - sucking face. To say I was angry with him would be an understatement. I was furious with him. He always got what he wanted and I hated that after all the rude comments and sexual jokes he still got Missy. She hated him and just look at her now. How is it that she could forgive him and not me?

I shook my head because I knew the reason. I had broken her. I was her best friend and I did the worst thing a man can do to a women. I had no need to even expect her to talk to me or even look at me.

And to add to the hate she had to feel for me she had been carrying my baby. It hurt that she never bothered to tell me for the longest time, but how could I expect her to when I was so rotten to her? I know that she loved that baby with all her heart, but what she didn't know was that I did too. I would have done everything in my power to be the best father to that child.

I walked away as I heard their 'I love you's. As much as I hated it was Eric that she feel deep in love with, I had to respect him for it. He had changed for her and there was no doubt that he loved her. And, he showed her more love for her in the few months he has been with her then I had in the years I have known her.

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Okay, I know it's very short. Don't hate but I am trying to wrap up some loose ends here. I hope that explains the ending of the Jace/Missy thing. Also, I am not writing the wedding and am going straight to the reception. Two more chapters and then the Epilogue. Sorry it took so long to upload.... Again.

Chapter 59

The Art of Hope (58)

Chapter 58

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

Nervous was the biggest understatement at this very moment. My knees were a'knocking and my heart was a'pounding, and breathing was almost unattainable.

"Stop sweating! You're going to make your make-up run!" Tony scolded at me but my nerves were having none of it.

"Shut up! I'm freaking out here!" I whisper yelled so that the thousand plus people would not hear me

through the thin doors. Those same thin doors that Eric was waiting behind. My heart started to race again.

"If you tell me to go out there and tell everyone that the wedding is off I will personally slit your throat. And, I won't even feel bad about it!" Anne whispered in the same harsh tone I had just used.

"Are you crazy? I want to marry him. It's the thousand plus people that will be watching my every move all the way to him. I know I'm going to fall or trip or... something." I threw my gloved hands up into the air. I really wasn't sure why I was freaking out so much. I had waited for this day to come and was extremely happy it was here, but it scared me shitless that I had to do it in front of all those people.

"Well, you better get ready because in three minutes you will be walking down that carpeted pathway to your beloved." Added Mike and I could not help but smile.

I had hoped to have father walk me all the way down the aisle like in a traditional American wedding, but here in Tesoro di Gioiello the traditions were

somewhat different. It was custom for the bride, or in this case the 'Princess' to walk her own way down. It was to show power and prestige, to show that she could stand alone if the health of her father and soon-to-be husband found an unfortunate fate. To me it was rubbish but I could understand the importance of it. I would have to walk my way down the elaborate aisle all by myself.

The decorations were exquisite. The soft golden colors mixed with the pale white perfectly, and the aqua blue accents sent the room into a fairytale world. Of course, it was all Tony and Mike's doing. They knew how to place colors together in a way that would relax the most stressed of people - yours truly. I closed my eyes remembering the sweet smell of the Blue Balloon Flowers (A.K.A Astra Double Blue) mixed with the fresh sent of Sombreuil Antique Climbing Rose. Every row of chairs began with a bouquet of the amazing flower arrangements. The two of them had even hung fabric from the ceiling to create an exotic look that still was elegant in its own way.

I knew when I stepped through the door there would be a blanket of baby blue flower petals, laid out by my darling sister and soon-to-be sister-in-law, Sydney, to lead me to Eric.

I curt shove pulled me out of my thoughts as the double doors opened and I was sent on my way down the path to my new life. A new life that was sure to be the most loved and rewarding of all. Eric and I, together in every way possible.

A smile formed on my face as I glanced over the decorations once more. The quests had all risen in honor of me, although many of them held a higher rank in life than I ever would. I looked at the smiling faces quickly, not wanting my nerves to hit me again. The family members sat in the very front rows and then it was the royals after that and then the 'random' people, as Mike called them, fallowed after.

I let my sight slip sneakily over the first row of my family's side. My father stood tall and proud a smile the size of Texas plastered on his slightly wrinkled face. I had never seen him so happy before. He was getting the best end of this, if I did say so myself. He

had raised Eric as his own and now that I was marrying Eric he did not have to feel he was taking the Kingdom away from him.

My father mouthed an "I love you" and I did my best to mouth one back but my lips would only form a smile. I could feel the tears begin to well up from the pure joy I was feeling. Everything was perfect.

My gaze slid to the rest of the bench expecting it to be fully empty. All my other family members where either out of my life or in the wedding. That's when my eyes landed on my mother. It took every bit of effort to continue my slow pace down the aisle as my breath lodged in my throat. The ever familiar moist water came to my eyes. She had come, after the weeks of not hearing from her she had come.

In order not to disturb the pace and setting of the moment I continued down the aisle to Eric. Letting my eyes leave my mother I found him there - smiling. He always looked happy to see me, but this time it was something completely new. His eyes sparkled like grey diamonds yet smoldered with a passion that was all mine to have. Unlike his usual broad smile

this one was small and refined, as if he was hiding to the world how joyous he was, but that was fine with me because I knew the absolute truth.

Now it was hard for me to keep the slow pace. It was hardly fast enough for me at all. Luckily, I was only a few short paces away from him now. My father stepped in now to "give me away" even though he had never really had me as his baby girl. My mother sent a love filled smile my way and my eyes moistened once again. And just like that all was forgiven. There was nothing she needed to say because I completely understood what she had gone through when I told her.

Trying to compose myself I turned my attention back to the love of my life. His dark suit gave him that business look that made me want to devour him, yet with that sweet smile spread across his face just made me want to hug him. He was undeniably attractive, and any outsider could see that, but knowing him through and through really made him that much more appealing to me. For lack of better

words the silver-grey eyed man in front of me was perfect. Well, for me anyways.

I was hardly aware of what my body was doing, as I felt my hand be passed from my father's to my soon-to-be husbands. The only thing that made me conscious of that was the warm tingly feeling his touch always gave me. Butterflies erupted within my stomach. These butterflies were the good ones.

There were words spoken about our union. None of which I really listened too. The only think that kept my attention was Eric and his smiling face. It surprised me that I could even love him more and more every moment I spent with him. The rest of the world melted away as he spoke his vows and I soon followed.

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I was now no longer Miss Mary Elizabeth Dawson, but Miss Mary Elizabeth Delamater. And because of that fact I could not stand still. I was jittery with glee, and from the quick loving glances from Eric I could tell he felt the same.

We greeted the hundreds of people with every other second Eric stealing kisses from me. I could not explain my elated feeling. It was like for the first time I understood what people meant but 'It feels like flying'. And that is just how it felt.

Most of the Royalty had left right after. Apparently, a reception was below them, and that was fine by me. I had Eric and that was really all I wanted right now.

"Okay, guys." My best friend Anne stole the microphone in order to announce the first dance. "Will the two newlyweds please take center stage?"

Eric and I both chuckled before he gave me another love filled peck and drug me to the dance floor. He gave me a seductively loving glance before pulling me into the dance.

Never in my life did I think I could be this lucky. I had a father, a mother, a sister, and now a loving husband. I was set for life in whatever I wanted to do. I smiled at the fact that I was no longer an American girl working for a penny that was never spent on herself. I was now a princess and was loved by the most amazing person in the world.

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I hope you guys liked this chapter. I know I said that I was going to skip the wedding but most of you wanted the wedding and because you guys are amazing I changed my whole plans and this is what I came up with. I hope you like it. I can't wait to write the next chapter. I mean, I am soooooooooooooo excited. I think we all are going to love the hot and steamy chapter between our most beloved characters.

Chapter 60

The Art of Hope (59)

Chapter 59

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'Okay guys, I want for forewarn you that this chapter is EXTREMLY sexual. I have it marked so if you don't want to read it don't.

The plane ride was short to our destination. Eric and I had no clue where we were going. My father just handed us some house keys and sent us on our way. At the moment we were in a rental car - a jeep, Eric picked it out, and were fallowing the GPS to an unknown location, although I did know it was somewhere in the mountains covered in slow.

Eric and I were quite on the way, just basking in the glory of our love for one another. It wasn't until he pulled up to a small cabin that I moved. The cabin was tucked under a cliff with evergreens all around it. Smoke streamed out of the little chimney, and I knew that my father must have had someone come and prepare it for us.

We were still in comfortable silence as we parked and I could feel the intense excitement growing between us. Eric grabbed mine and his bags and took long strides to the door while I slowly strolled to the door. I wanted this, and every moment, of today to last. I took in the cool brisk air and the smell of the mountain. I had never really been to a place like this, with snow on the ground almost all year, but a part of me loved it. But the reason I loved it the most was because Eric and I would be totally and completely alone, and I knew when we got back we wouldn't have that again for a long time.

Eric's strong arms wrapping around me forced me to come back to the present. "Are you ready for tonight, babe?" His voice was thick with seduction and for

once I let myself shiver from it freely, because after tonight I would no longer be an Eric-virgin.

"Oh, you have no idea." With that he picked me up and kissed me while carrying me through the door.

"I love you Mrs. Delamater." He spoke against my lips and with those words he had me squirming for his touch, already.

I slowly laced up my one peace lingerie preparing myself for the adventure to come. I took one last glance at myself in the mirror. My hair was down and still slightly damp from my quick shower. When lacing up the lingerie I made sure just enough showed to get him going. Gabbing a robe off the hook I slung it over me, then decided that it would be more dramatic if I just stepped out in just the skimpy outfit.

I creaked open the door slowly, so not to let Eric know I was coming. He was stretched out on the bed looking up at the ceiling in only his button up shirt and black slacks. A sloppy grin drawn out across his face, and I couldn't help the smile that grew on mine. I was so unbelievably happy to be with Eric right

now, and I was positive that this feeling would never change.

I stepped through the doorway quietly, taking in the soft lighting that threw shadows around the room. Everything seemed so unreal, almost as if I was in a fairytale. The room had a faint chill in the air and as I closed the door I suppressed a shiver.

At the sound of the closing door Eric's head snapped over. In that second our eyes meat and the burning passion of love in his made it impossible to breath. He spoke to me through his eyes for what seemed like hours, saying he loved me and that he was the luckiest man in the world. After conveying all his emotion he drank my still form. First, his eyes wondered slowly down the length of me and everywhere his eyes went a burn of desire fallowed. Next, his sloppy smile of happiness turned into an intense scowl of pure lust, along with his silver-grey eyes.

*****Sexual Content*****

I couldn't take the separation a minute longer and I closed the distance between us in just a second. Our

lips meet and Eric's strong, overly large hands cupped my face sweetly. I let him take control then, wanting him to enjoy every second of this - like he disserved too. Never releasing his grasp from my face he worked his tongue into my mouth. The groan that escaped my lungs was one of a needy animal, and I let my hands dig into his soft hair and pull hard. He answered with an animal-like moan himself before backing us up to the bed. My knees buckled and he landed softly on top of me as he trailed kisses along my neck.

My body was in a flushed heat as his wet lips left trails down and around my collar bone. My hands were itching to do something so I brought them up to undo the first button of his shirt. With a grunt he moved them away and placed my hands to my sides. His lips meet mine again and the force of the kiss knocked the air out of me until suddenly, he pulled away. I was left in a daze as he straddled me just on my thighs, making sure not to put too much of his weight on me.

He waited for my eyes to meet his and when they did he gave me a look as if to say 'don't you dare look away' and I wasn't about to. He kept eye contact as his fingers traced up to undo the lace-up material. No matter how hard I tried to I could not gain a full breath. And when he reached the spaced between my breasts I couldn't help but gasp at the feel shut my eyes in order to control my body. The feel of his fingers stopped and I was forced to look at him again only to find him giving me the don't-you-dare-look-away look.

With great effort I managed to keep eye contact while he unlaced the rest of my outfit. And before I knew it the suspense of wanting him kissing me was satisfied. Eric's strong yet soft lips met mine for what seemed like the hundredth time. Our lips locked together and this time I dominated the kiss. As my tongue explored his spicy tasted I felt his hand slide in-between the thin, see-threw fabric and my skin. The feel of his touch was something I would never get used to and so he had the satisfaction of my back arching and my nipples hardening as his thumb grazed over the numb.

At that point I couldn't take it a second longer and I practically tore off his shirt in the process of me feeling him. He must have had the same idea because the moment his shirt was off he was sliding the material of my lingerie down exposing my breasts fully. A growl-like sound escaped him as his mouth covered my left nipple and my finger dug into his hair once more. When he pulled away he blew on it making it hard for me to comprehend anything other than the icy-burn it left behind. His kisses worked upward and back to my mouth. I let him ravage me there while I worked on getting his pants down.

We both panted as he pulled away and traced his kisses back down and between the valley of my breasts. His eye collided with mine as he continued down to relieve me of the rest of my clothing. My hips uncontrollably jutted forward when his finger grazed my pelvic bone. It only took him a moment to completely remove the material and he peeped up at me through my legs. A wild smirk was resting on his lips as he winked at me making me, scaring me with his teasing. He kissed at my thighs and I squirmed like a child. So much so, he had to hold me down

with his hands. I closed my eyes and uncontrollably arched my back. I could feel his breath fan out right over my entrance and my heart rate picked up so fast I was afraid I would die of a heart attack. That's when it happened. I had never had a man's face down there before but I knew, very much so, what he was doing.

"Eric." I whimpered and shuffled away from the undying pleasure of having his tongue down there. My body didn't know how to handle it as I breathed heavily and let out a breathless, "Oh my god." A humming heat was about to explode within me. I knew it was an orgasm, but a totally different one from what I had ever had before. My body began to shake and convulsed as I breathlessly screamed his name.

Suddenly, it was over and I was already feeling the drain it had on my body, but Eric was far from done. His lips were at my ear in just a second. "I love to hear you scream my name almost as much as I love you." I sucked in a breath at his sweet, yet seductive

words. I wanted to tell him I loved him too, but the left over orgasm had my mind foggy.

I wrapped my legs around his torso and with as much force as I could muster, flipped him over - me on top now. A look of surprise filled his eyes for only a second. I closed his gaping mouth with mine and rolled my hips over his covered manhood. All the muscles in his body tensed as I did it once more. His large hands massaged at my bottom in a needy fashion as I nibbled on his earlobe. I thrust my hips once more and he let out a rumbled growl while his hands followed the curve of my hips to find my breasts again.

I could hardly take the teasing anymore, so I inched my way down his torso. Kissing him much like the way he kissed me. I got muffled groans as I licked and nibbled my way to his manhood. The great thing about Eric is that he was completely man - strong, handsome, muscular, and he even tasted like man.

I sat up grabbing on to each side of his boxers. I gave him a seductive look before I yanked then off and down his muscular legs.

If I ever thought Eric was perfect I was wrong then. The scene in front of me now was perfection. The soft, warm light cast shadows against his crisp tan skin, his muscles rippling form the sexual tension, and his manhood firm and ready for me. Eric was the perfect size, not scary big and far from small.

My libido kicked into overdrive as I licked my lips. I practically jumped on him forcing our lips together. We both groaned as we each let our hands roam on the other. It was no time until Eric was on top of me again. The feel of this member prodding at my thighs had me gasping for air and needing him so much it almost hurt.

Not being able to take it, I reached down, wrapping my hand around his length. A seductive smile lit my face when his eyes widened for a moment and his body tensed. He reached down, taking me hand away from him. Our eyes met and so many emotions ran through his that I could not catch them all. "Are you ready, babe?" His voice was husky and rough with pure utter need.

I tried to slowly nod my head but the excitement building up would not allow that. Eric only smile as he leaned down to kiss every inch of my naked skin. "God, I love you so damn much," he whispered against my skin. I was too intoxicated from his love to answer, but I didn't have too, he already knew I loved him.

After working my nipples into a hard nub of need, he positioned himself in front of me. He didn't have to speak to tell me what he was feeling. His eyes told me more than his lips ever could. Giving me soft, loving smile, I felt him press right at my entrance. I clung to the sheets for dear life and all my airways come to a complete stop.

His control was beyond any I could ever have, as he inched in slowly. I couldn't take the burning heat that was erupting from me and my hips thrust forward, only to be stopped by a pair of overly large hands. Eric gave me a look that said 'Don't you move a muscle' and I bit my lips in order to control myself.

He continued his way in slowly, and I suppressed a scream of frustration. How could something be so

pleasurable but just not enough? My grip on the sheets was the only thing keeping me sane in that moment and I moaned at the feel of him going deeper. Then, all of the sudden, he was all the way in me, and the control I had just gained vanished.

He seemed to lose control himself as his lips came down to my neck. His thrusts become a steady motion and my hips started to move with his. We both whispered 'Oh's and 'Yes's with each thrust, and I couldn't help but get hotter at the look on Eric's face - etched with utter concentration and love.

I had to dig my nails into his back to keep in place as his thrusts grew faster. I could feel the climax coming, almost like the calm before the storm. "Faster," was all I needed to whisper for Eric to go into a rhythm that had my toes curling. With one deep powerful thrust and a scream of his name, I was sent into a world of oblivion.

Eric's POV

My wife was the most amazing creature on this earth. It was as simple as that. I looked over at her sleeping form and smiled to myself. She was

downright perfect in every way. I don't ever remember having this feeling before with any other woman and I didn't want to have it with any other woman. I couldn't keep my lips off of her, and I didn't try to as I kissed her forehead while she slept.

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WOW, I feel dirty and oddly satisfied with myself now. Keep your eyes open for the Epilogue.

Chapter 61

Epilogue

Epilogue

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Ten Years Later

Now that I had taken complete position of the King of Tesoro di Gioiello things had become hectic. I would be gone from my family for weeks at a time and it was putting a stress on me that I could hardly handle, especially now. Not seeing Missy's beautiful face every morning was something I had grown used to - not that I wanted to. Times like these, being away from them, I spent in a hurried manner so to get home to them sooner.

Missy had blessed me with three wonderful little girls. Olivia Grace Delamater, our oldest child, is of nine years. She was conceived on our honeymoon. Here bouncy curls, much like Missy's, and bright grey eyes were always full of wonder and ready to go at any moment. Adele Bruna Delamater and Cecilia Diana Delamater, our twins, had taken my dirty blond hair and my eyes, but the face shape and the all around cuteness of them was completely and totally from my wife. Although they were only three they had developed their own identity. Cecilia was much like her grandfather. She could own a room just by walking into it. Adele, on the other hand was somewhat shy but sharp as a nail.

I sighed in relief as the plane landed. I was home, finally. It was late, going on eleven, and I knew that I would have to wait to see the kids. I would just peep in and kiss them goodnight and wait until morning for the sweet kissing and tea parties to start.

Things had changed now. The help - Missy felt that servant was a degrading word - now had complete and total respect for me and I had even befriended a

few of them. The ladies of the Kingdom now realized that I was so in love with my wife that they had no hold on me, and thank goodness, had given up their attempts to sabotage our marriage.

The castle was quiet now as I made my way to the kitchen, dropping my stuff on the floor of my office first. The smell of coffee glided into my senses and my pace picked up just knowing she had waited up for me. The separation was hard for the both of us but at this point in time was the hardest. When I entered the door my whole body relaxed at seeing her - the love of my life, and my soul mate. It was such a strange feeling. When I was gone nothing seemed at peace, it was as if I was missing something, but now that I could see her I felt whole and complete again. She never has realized how much I need her, and lord knows I have tried to tell her, but I don't think she understood.

She sloshed soapy water on herself from the dishes, which she did not have to clean but still did. I heard her sob once as her shoulders shook. My heart ripped apart from the sound even though I knew nothing

too horrid had happened to her. She was just an emotional wreck right now. Clearing the room in three smooth movements, I wrapped my arms around her and held her tight. The soft gasp that came from her lips turned into sobs of happiness. I may have been gone for only a week but that was long enough for the both of us to feel empty.

"I love you, babe." I whispered, as she turned herself around in my arms, her eyes wet from tears.

"I love you, too." I didn't miss her voice crack at the end. She always took my breath away. Even when her curls were a mess on the top of her head and her eyes were wet with tears.

I smashed my lips to hers with a passionate force. It never got old, the feeling it gave me to kiss her. It was as if the whole world stopped so that we could just love each other. I kissed my way down her neck and nuzzled my head there. Her smell calmed my anxieties to a mere nothing.

"How about telling me what's got you so upset." The deep exasperated sigh that came next told me she was embarrassed by her outburst.

"Mom called, they're not going to be able to make it here for the baby shower. You know this is the third baby shower she has missed! And she has only seen the twins twice. I haven't seen Katie in a whole year and she is getting so big." Missy and her mother have been trying to patch things up, and for the most part, it's working. But, ever so often they hit a snag and it's mostly because of the kids. Missy wanted them to know their grandmother, to love her. Her mother, on the other hand, would not put up the effort to get here, even when we offered to pay.

"Babe, please don't fuss over this. How about we take a vacation, as a family? We'll take the girls to the States so they can meet Annie's new baby and stay with their grandmother... and maybe we can escape to our little place?" After our honeymoon, Missy and I fell in love with the cabin. I ended up buying it for our five year anniversary.

Her sigh of contentment lessened my worry about her emotions and I rested my hands on her seven month baby bump. Our son was growing in there, and I couldn't wait to see him.

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Well, it's all over guys. I am truly so sad to see it finished. This was my very first story ever and I am so thankful for all the votes and comments and wonderful fans I made off of it, not to mention the friends as well.

I just want to say THANK YOU to the ones that stayed with the story from the beginning (You know who you are) and a thank you to the ones that comment almost every chapter (You guys were sometimes the only reason that another chapter was put up.) And a thank you to those that just loved the story. I don't know if I should be happy or sad that it's over. I think I am a little of both, but I am really going to miss Eric being in my head all the time... I mean, I think we all will miss his sexy ass.... Especially after the last chapter, eh? Am I right? Haha

Anyways, just one more big THANK YOU! I love you guys and I will hopefully have time to work on my other story. And I am currently working on the plot to yet another story. Hope to see some of you comment on those in the near future.

About the Author

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